

THE PRIVATE LETTERS OF
PRINCESS LIEVEN TO PRINCE METTERNICH



Princess Lieven by Sir Thomas Lawrence

THE PRIVATE LETTERS
OF PRINCESS LIEVEN TO
PRINCE METTERNICH

1820-1826

*edited and with a biographical
foreword*

by

PETER QUENNELL

assisted in translation

by

DILYS POWELL

It seems to me that our correspondence ought to be of the greatest value to an historian of our times. My letters have been a most faithful record of everything that came to my knowledge. . . . In short, it strikes me that the truth will emerge more clearly from this exchange of letters than from any memoirs that may be published

(MADAME DE LIEVEN to METTERNICH 1826)

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

First Edition . . . 1937

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PRINTED BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE.

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Biographical Foreword

SOME time between 1917 and 1919 there were smuggled into Germany, among other miscellaneous archives of the nobility of Courland, certain large boxes understood to enclose the papers of Prince and Princess Lieven who, a century earlier, had played an extremely important part in the drama of high European politics. By the will of their last surviving son, Prince Alexander Lieven, who died during the 'eighties, it was laid down that these papers should remain unexamined for a period of fifty years. His family respected their ancestor's wishes : war and revolution intervened : and thus not until 1936, when the twin empires of Russia and Austria-Hungary had both vanished, were the contents of the boxes finally brought to light. They proved to include much that was of very great interest from the social and from the strictly historical point of view ; while, amid letters, notes, political sketches, household accounts and assorted family documents, appeared a series of thin paper-covered notebooks, closely but clearly written in the Princess Dorothea Lieven's own characteristic and exceedingly decisive hand. At first sight, they might have seemed to form a journal ; but a subsequent examination showed that the journal was, in fact, made up of extracts from a long correspondence, and that the correspondence had been addressed to Prince Metternich, Chancellor of the Austrian Empire, nicknamed by his diplomatic colleagues "Grand Inquisitor of Europe."

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The world knew that Chancellor and Ambassadors had once been lovers. But, before going on to discuss the history of their *liaison*—a curious semi-diplomatic, semi-passionate affair—it may be as well to discuss the antecedents of the remarkable and fascinating woman with whom we are concerned. Christened Dorothea von Benckendorff, Madame de Lieven came of an ancient Livonian family which, although influential and distinguished, had been ennobled only during the last hundred years. Her mother, a worthy German baroness, had been confidante and companion to the Empress Maria, wife of the Emperor Paul I; and, after her mother's death, which occurred in 1797, Dorothea—then a *pensionnaire* at the aristocratic convent-school of Smolny—had the Empress herself as patroness and social supporter. At fifteen, under the direction of her imperial guardian, she contracted an entirely suitable marriage—to Count Christopher Lieven, who, still in his late 'twenties, had already achieved an exalted military rank; and this marriage, in spite of many vicissitudes and, at least on Madame de Lieven's side, of numerous infidelities, continued for the best part of four decades. There is no doubt that Count Lieven made an excellent husband; and recently discovered letters show that, for him at any rate, their alliance never degenerated into the mere fashionable marriage of expediency it has usually been considered. To the very end of his life, he appears to have suffered deeply both from his wife's indifference to the ordinary conjugal conventions and from the extravagance with which she dispensed sums of money he had often been at some pains to scrape together. One imagines that he respected his wife's gifts; but it is clear that, for a man as upright, punctilious and limited as Count Lieven, the companionship of such a

wife would become, after a time, as exhausting as, at an earlier moment perhaps, it had been stimulating—that he was the sadder and wearier partner in their brilliant progress.

Brilliant it was, almost from the beginning. Minister of War under Paul I, Lieven was appointed by Paul's successor, Alexander I, to the Embassy of Berlin, where he remained till the summer of 1812. That same year, on the 18th December, he presented his credentials as Russian Ambassador at the Court of St. James; and, though his wife continued to criticise England, and to dislike its climate and a great many of its inhabitants, it was in London that her real genius first unfolded. That genius was at once personal and political. Her destiny was to become the greatest, most formidable, most feared, most flattered, worst hated female politician of the day—a woman so thoroughly imbued with the political spirit that every pleasure must have some political colouring, every hour of the day its political background; till she mingled amorous and political intrigue as a matter of course. Political were the origins of her best-known love affair. During the autumn of 1818, the Lievens attended the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, which had been called by the Allied Powers to determine the evacuation of French territory; and here Dorothea encountered Prince Metternich, forty-five years old, endowed with winning manners and Olympian good looks—moreover, one of the three or four men then busily engaged in regulating the affairs of a disturbed, disaffected and impoverished Europe, and in restoring the sacred hegemony of its absolute sovereigns.

Metternich made her conquest without delay. Does she remember (he enquires in a letter written from Brussels on the 28th November when the exigencies of a diplomatic

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career had finally torn the lovers apart) how, just a month earlier, he had paid her his first ceremonial visit :

L'heure que j'ai passée, assis à tes pieds, m'a prouvé que la place était bonne. Il m'a paru en rentrant chez moi que je te connaissais depuis des années . . .

Le 29, je ne t'ai pas vue.

Le 30, j'ai trouvé que la veille avait été bien froide et vide de sens.

J'ignore le jour où tu es venue dans ma loge : *tu* as eu le fièvre—mon amie, tu m'as appartenu !

Metternich's letters to Countess Lieven (edited by M. Jean Hanoteau in 1909) cover the heyday of their *liaison* and reveal a very unexpected and—for his admirers, presumably—a somewhat disconcerting aspect of the Grand Inquisitor's character. They are romantic, pseudo-metaphysical, diffuse : they abound in rhetorical passages, in highly coloured protestations of undying love—all brought out with a rather too easy and self-satisfied air. Metternich emerges a *doctrinaire* amorist, suitably sentimental, fundamentally cynical, sure of himself to a point where the fatuous approaches the sublime. He is lavish of graceful moral turns, and, more than once, reverts to the subject of M. de Lieven, whom he implores Dorothea to treat indulgently.

Mon amie (he writes, on the 14th December 1818) je te remercie de la conduite que tu veux observer vis-à-vis de ton mari. Tu sais que je veux que tu sois bonne, douce, excellente pour lui. Je n'ai pas ses droits, et il ne peut avoir ce que m'appartient. . . . Je n'ai jamais brouillé un ménage, je respecte la loi . . .

And when, later, she announces that she has become pregnant, he is able to congratulate her with touching effusion.

Unfortunately, the two sets of correspondence—Metternich's letters to Madame de Lieven and the extracts from

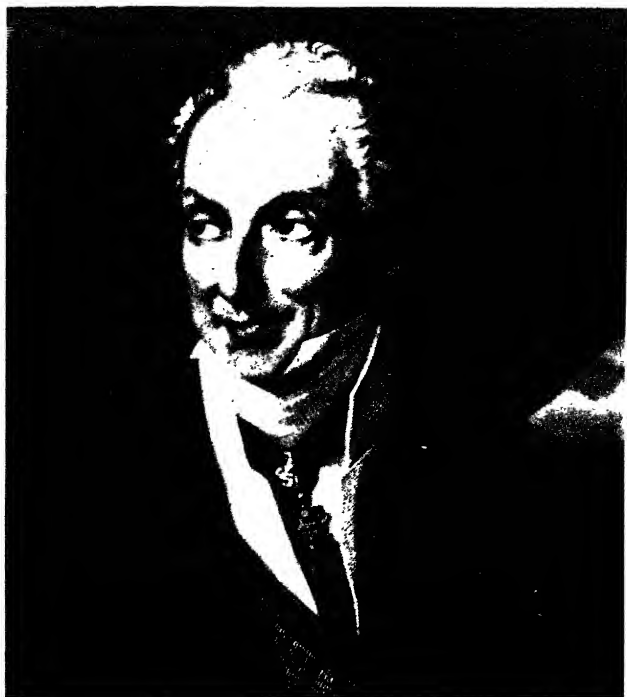
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Madame de Lieven's letters to her lover now for the first time published—do not overlap. Metternich's stop short abruptly at the end of April 1819 ; Madame de Lieven's begin on January 6th, 1820, continuing with few interruptions for the next six years. Except when a European conference brought them together, the two lovers could not hope to meet. They established brief contacts in Hanover and at Frankfurt during the year 1821, and again the following year at the Congress of Verona, but otherwise their commerce was largely imaginative. They became political allies rather than impassioned intimates ; yet the intimacy, after several years of separation, was still warm enough to favour the outbreak of a violent quarrel ; and when, in 1827, Metternich celebrated his second marriage—with the young and beautiful Marie-Antoinette von Leykam—a love-match which the ultra-aristocratic Madame de Lieven considered far beneath him, their friendship (already injured by differences of opinion on Near-Eastern politics) was broken off abruptly and never resumed.

Metternich, thereupon, returned her letters. It would appear that the Duke of Wellington, an adept both in the diplomacy of love and the chicanery of high politics, acted as go-between and agent, and that it was he who handed back the voluminous correspondence that had accumulated in Metternich's secret archives. Naturally, Madame de Lieven re-read her outpourings ; naturally, she was interested by the extremely complete picture of political and social life that she had managed to draw ; and, luckily, she decided that it would be worth her while to make copious extracts. The receptacle she chose was a series of little notebooks, printed in England and apparently intended for schoolroom use,

since each bears upon its cover the representation of a horse made up of all the tricks of penmanship, all the pothooks, curves and flourishes taught by expert writing-masters of the early nineteenth century. In copying out the passages that struck her as important, Madame de Lieven was careful to omit passages that gave too clear an indication of her relationship with the famous Chancellor. The effect, nevertheless, is far from impersonal, in the sense that they provide no suggestion of the writer's temperament—no reflection of the quality of her mind. Just the reverse is true : for Madame de Lieven was one of those correspondents who could not set pen to paper without giving us some illuminating glimpse of the brain behind the pen, or enabling us to recapture some tone of voice. The tone of her letters is unsparing and frequently acid. Madame de Lieven adored politics as one adores a game, but could not help despising many of the starred, epauletted busybodies who sat down to play. She loved royalty ; but, after all (she felt bound to remark), what children majesties and imperial highnesses very often were ! She courted and flattered George IV ; but, though many diarists and letter-writers have made fun of that unfortunate and unhappy monarch, none has done so more effectively than Madame de Lieven—particularly when she reports his ramblings at length or gives us verbatim account of his after-dinner eloquence.

Yet Madame de Lieven was the slave of the world she condemned. To be important—to be a secret power behind thrones and chancelleries—the clandestine correspondent of monarchs and arch-diplomatists—that alone would have more than compensated her for the ennui that she frequently endured in the discharge of her delicate and perilous function.



Prince Metternich from an engraving of a portrait by Benedetti

She formed part of a supremely important cabal. She belonged to that select band of ultra-reactionaries, which included Metternich, Castlereagh—a close and deeply regretted friend—and the Czar Alexander of Russia. She was in their counsels; she knew their plans and kept their secrets.

Such, at all events, was Madame de Lieven's own impression; and, though there were some contemporary observers who considered that "the Snipe" considerably over-rated her real importance, modern historians are inclined to admit that her power was genuine. Primarily, she acted as spy and agent; and it is to be observed that, during the period covered by these letters, Austria had two ambassadors in London—Prince Esterhazy, who frequently complained of the consultations that went on behind his back, and whose influence his rival did her best to undermine, and Madame de Lieven, who gave a regular report on English politics. Similarly, she reinforced and replaced her husband. Her letters, punctually sent off to the Court of Russia and the Chancellery of Vienna, were stuffed with the news, conjectures and rumours that her position in English political circles enabled her to pick up. She was a sort of female *liaison* officer who acted as intermediary between like-minded political groups in the various European capitals; and her peculiar combination of acute social sense and very highly developed political *flair* made it certain that any momentous political project would reach her hearing long before that project had become reality. She was a useful woman, an attractive woman, an unscrupulous woman. She was ambitious—and ambitious with something of the cold selfless enthusiasm that inspires the great artist and the visionary: for what she desired was power—not power that shows itself, not power that tends to material

advantage, but power at its most intoxicating—as an end in itself.

The love of power is an unamiable trait ; and it would be foolish to pretend that Madame de Lieven's character had not its extremely unamiable aspects. To complain that she was a snob is beside the point. The worst type of snobbery is self-conscious ; and Madame de Lieven's was so entirely unself-conscious, so coolly exclusive of all the weaker, warmer and more complicated human feelings, that to attack or attempt to palliate it would be equally purposeless. She flattered eminence and consistently ignored obscurity. Now and then, she would mistake one for the other ; but (as a famous anecdote relates) when the young man, whom she had supposed was somebody and who, it afterwards transpired, was nobody, sought to obtain entrance to her salon, she annihilated him with a glacial : “Monsieur, je ne vous connais pas.”

More damning, perhaps, was her vein of perfidy. Madame de Lieven's existence was passed in a succession of passionate political friendships ; and—excepting always her long and touching friendship with M. Guizot—each of these intimacies came to a bad and bitter end. The closing stages of her friendship with Metternich appear in this book. At the beginning, she is Metternich's devoted confidante. She is careful to reassure him that her more or less affectionate associations with George IV, Wellington, Castlereagh—who used to seize her by the arm and drag her off on interminable promenades round Kensington Gardens—have no real emotional significance. She admits that the King is in love with her, but denies that she finds his person or his protestations other than absurd. . . . Then, gradually, the fascination of

Canning makes itself felt. Canning—long hated, the object of innumerable intrigues—was now the rising star ; and if there was one charm she could not resist it was the charm of success. Miraculously, she discovered that Mr. Canning, whose Jacobinism she had once so much deplored, was no revolutionary but a high-minded and far-sighted statesman : just as, on Canning's death, she was to develop a sympathy for English Liberalism as embodied in the elderly, but dignified, eloquent and charming Lord Grey.

“Pour elle” (writes Hanoteau, quoting from the Memoirs of Madame de Boigne) “tout se réduisait à des questions de personnes.” She understood little, he adds, of the problems with which European statesmen were then struggling. But, if this judgement is to some extent accurate, it is also true that, for Madame de Lieven, all personal relationships were ultimately based on questions of politics, and that it is impossible to imagine her engaged in a non-political love-affair. Yet from interested motives spring disinterested passions. There is no doubt that she was capable of love ; and, even though these letters had no other merit, they would be worth reading because they enlarge and humanise our view of her character. Thus, from Hanoteau we learn that literature was not to Madame de Lieven's taste and that she rarely found a book that held her attention. From her letters, on the other hand, we discover that she adored Shakespeare, was an enthusiastic admirer of Scott's novels and was so much moved by the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* that she had once contemplated suicide off Brighton beach !

She, too, had her endearing touches of Romanticism, and suffered the attacks of the great Romantic bugbear, Ennui. Its spectre pursued her as long as she lived. Writing in Sep-

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tember 1833, Creevey gives an illuminating account of a dialogue between Madame de Lieven and Talleyrand's niece, the celebrated and seductive Duchesse de Dino :

The Lieven's creed was that she *would not* be bored, and the Dino's that she *could not*. The Russian avowed that the instant a person began to bore her, she got up and left him, and that nothing could or should extort any civility from her at the experience of being bored ; so the Dino said, "What do you do when you stay at Windsor with the Queen ?" "Oh !" said the other, "Elle m'amuse," which I think was very *low* ; she ought to have said *that* was her trade—civility to crowned heads . . . Then the modest Lieven said, "She knew in return she must bore people herself, for she had observed that at dinners she was the only person who had ever an empty chair next to her . . ." "But," said the Dino, "that is from the fear of people lest they should bore *you*."

After perusing the letters in this collection, I am not sure that a student of her biography will come away with a more exalted impression of Madame de Lieven's personal characteristics ; but I have no doubt that he will feel that he likes her better. As she confesses to Metternich, she was "a woman, and very much of a woman" ; and Madame de Lieven's, femininity is always obvious. She is feminine in her inconsequence and her moments of perversity : feminine in her disingenuous efforts to assume a frank and disarmingly ingenuous air : feminine in her elaborate attempts to forestall criticism. There is no reason to suppose that she was the mistress of George IV ; but it is quite clear that she was in some trepidation as to the reports that might be sent home by Prince Esterhazy ; hence her anxiety to belittle the Austrian Ambassador whenever she could. If she did not love the Grand Inquisitor too much to deceive him, she loved him too much to permit him to discover that he had perhaps been deceived.

Metternich occupied her imagination from 1818 to the beginning of 1826. By the end of 1826 Madame de Lieven was already disillusioned ; and her references to him, in letters written after that date, are as cold and spiteful as any of her previous references to Canning. On October 20th she grows especially virulent :

Pour ma part (she writes) j'en suis venue à croire que Metternich, l'homme d'habileté, est mort, car il n'y en a pas trace dans sa présente conduite. C'est quelque usurpateur de son nom qui a cherché querelle à tout le monde, qui persiste obstinément dans toutes les erreurs politiques que sa vanité a provoquées . . . et qui, pour couronner ses erreurs, à l'âge de soixante ans, agit comme un niais.

It seems hardly necessary to explain that the crowning idiocy which Madame de Lieven laments was her former lover's marriage to Mlle von Leykam ; but it is worth noting that, in the interests of satire, she gives the infatuated chancellor six years too many.

Canning and Grey were Metternich's platonic successors. But Canning died ; by 1833, the charm of Grey had begun to wear off—she was designating him brusquely “an old woman” ; and, in 1834, the blow descended. Her husband had never been a brilliant diplomatist. Madame de Lieven's talents were incontestable ; but, as pitted against Lord Palmerston, over the disastrous affair of Sir Stratford Canning (whom the English government wished to send to St. Petersburg), those talents proved singularly ineffective ; and, in May, the Lievens were recalled to Russia. Madame de Lieven refused to accept their dismissal quietly. She had written often in eulogistic terms of Russia's present and former sovereigns ; but the prospect of spending the rest of her life at the Russian Court was intolerable to a woman who

had been educated in London society and whose intelligence had matured under the influence of some of the best talkers and most astute politicians of the period. Personal misfortune followed public reverse. Madame de Lieven was an exceedingly affectionate mother ; and, in 1835, her two favourite sons, George and Arthur, died within the same month. Their death left her crushed in health and spirits. At all costs, she felt, she must get abroad ; and, that autumn, she crossed the frontier bound for France and Germany.

Thenceforward, Paris was the centre of her operations ; and, though cut off from her husband with whom she had quarrelled, and from the Emperor Nicholas whose command to return to Russia she had disobeyed, Madame de Lieven continued to weave her political web. The history of her almost domestic association with M. Guizot is well known. The mistress of Metternich gave place to the devoted companion of Louis-Philippe's bourgeois minister ; and it seems highly probable that had not Madame de Lieven—Princess de Lieven since 1826—been dismayed by the idea of shrinking to the social dimensions of plain "Madame Guizot," she might have accepted her *cicisbeo's* hand in marriage. During 1838, three years after her flight from Russia, Prince Lieven died. Madame de Lieven—temporarily, at least—was heart-broken, but, with characteristic elasticity, set to work to rebuild her existence. Followed ten years of busy scheming. Her position in Paris was less important than her position in London ; but it had its advantages ; and Lady Granville, an old friend, whose husband was at that time British Ambassador in Paris, describes her as being in great beauty and high good humour, perpetually surrounded by the kind of society that suited her best.



Prince Lieven, from a portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence

The revolutions of 1848 drove her abroad ; and it was during this year that she encountered Metternich for the last time. Both were exiles ; both were staying at Brighton. Metternich had reached England with his third wife ; Madame de Lieven was with Guizot ; and it is odd to imagine the two elderly ex-lovers meeting in their seaside lodgings, to discuss the calamitous triumph of the Liberal movement. But Madame de Lieven was not a woman who forgave easily. Three decades had passed since the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle ; yet three decades were not sufficient to efface her bitterness ; and her final references to Metternich are peculiarly uncharitable.

Je vois M. et Mme de Metternich (she wrote to M. de Barante) tous les jours. Elle, grosse, vulgaire, naturelle, bonne et d'un usage facile. Lui, plein de sérénité, de satisfaction intérieure, d'interminable bavardage, bien long, bien lent, bien lourd, très métaphysique, ennuyeux quand il parle de lui-même et de son infallibilité, charmant quand il raconte le passé et surtout l'empereur Napoléon.

Madame de Lieven's association with Guizot, whom she thanked on her death-bed in 1857 for "twenty years of affection and happiness," has been fully chronicled in Ernest Daudet's *Une Vie d'Ambassadrice au Siècle Dernier*. Within twelve months of her death, she was painted by Watts ; and it is interesting to contrast this picture with Lawrence's unfinished portrait, executed when she was in the first flush of her youth and beauty. Both are unmistakably the same woman. One recognises the same sharp features, the same well-defined, imperious, inquisitive nose, the same sceptical and slightly sensual mouth, large and intelligent but firmly indented at the corners. Yet how enormous is the abyss that divided the two—what wars, revolutions, reforms, social

changes, political reverses ! On August 8th, 1826, Madame de Lieven writes to Metternich announcing that she has caught a glimpse of "the little future Queen . . . In spite of the caresses the King lavished on her, I could see that he did not like dandling on his sixty-four-year-old knee this little bit of the future, aged 7." Incidentally, Madame de Lieven did not realise that this "little bit of the future" would preside over the downfall of the old, aristocratic, ultra-reactionary universe to which she herself belonged—that she would receive a polite rebuff from the royal niece of George IV. Her world was the world of Castlereagh, Canning and Liverpool : she was out of her element in the orderly universe of the Victorian era.

* * *

In preparing an English edition of these letters, I have been indebted to the enthusiastic collaboration of Miss Dilys Powell, and to the advice and kindly assistance of Prince and Princess Paul Lieven. No attempt has been made to give them a literary elegance that the original does not possess. Madame de Lieven wrote fluent, but incorrect, French. In parts, her narrative tends to become somewhat fragmentary and disjointed ; and such portions have been omitted from the English rendering.

PART I

A New Reign

A New Reign

IN January 1820, George IV, *de facto* sovereign since 1811, finally ascended the throne of England. Neither Government nor Opposition had very much to hope from the accession of their new master; for it was clear that such talents as he had once possessed were largely decayed; while both parties had learned to distrust his principles. A new mistress now occupied his heart. Lady Hertford, the sexagenarian favourite of many years' standing, had now been replaced by Lady Conyngham, who, though slightly younger, was herself the mother of a grown-up family, and the Conynghams formed the nucleus of the small royal clique which had its headquarters at the Cottage, Windsor, and the Pavilion, Brighton. To make matters more difficult, there existed a bitter feud between Lady Castlereagh, wife of the Foreign Secretary, and Lady Conyngham, whom, before her elevation to the royal alcove, Lady Castlereagh had affronted. Wellington was also out of favour; and part of Madame de Lieven's importance arose from the fact that she was in close touch both with the Ministers and the King's circle, and acted as peacemaker and intermediary.

Of the various public questions that at once became urgent, the gravest and apparently the most insoluble was the problem of the King's divorce. Should Queen Caroline be recognised? The King pressed for divorce proceedings; but the Ministers very sensibly held back, and were only brought to compliance by their belief that the Whigs might seize this opportunity of climbing into power. According to Madame de Lieven, the Government con-

sented to instigate proceedings against the Queen if she came to England, on the express understanding (which they had received from Brougham) that she would not come. Brougham's conduct, throughout the whole affair, seems to have been singularly double-faced; for it was on his advice that Caroline refused the annuity of £50,000, promised her should she consent to remain abroad. Her return left the Ministers no alternative but to bow to the King's wishes. They undertook the Queen's trial with the utmost unwillingness. Brougham, however, had determined to profit by the Government's difficulty; and during the proceedings that followed he gave an extraordinary display of forensic skill, belabouring King, Ministers and witnesses with equal enthusiasm. Towards the Queen herself, his attitude was completely cynical; and Madame de Lieven quotes a characteristic pleasantry to show that he was not under the smallest illusion as to his royal client's virtue.

On June 6th, 1820, after a conference with Brougham at Saint-Omer, Queen Caroline landed in England, where she was at once welcomed by demonstrations of tremendous sympathy. A last effort was made to induce her to leave; but the King declined to allow her name to be restored to the prayer book; and, at this juncture, negotiations broke down. Lord Liverpool, thereupon, introduced a bill in the House of Lords to deprive the Queen of her "titles, prerogative rights, privileges and exemptions," and to dissolve her marriage with His Majesty. The Queen's Trial dragged out its ignominious length through the summer and autumn; and students of the period will find that Madame de Lieven's letters provide a valuable addition to the brilliant account furnished by Thomas Creevey in his letters to Miss Ord. For several months, the country appeared to be on the brink of a bloody civil war. Castlereagh (most unpopular of all the ministers) was obliged to put up a bed in the Foreign Office, since he ran serious personal danger

every time he left his house ; the Guards were disaffected ; and the mob poured riotously through the streets, smashing windows and compelling the occupants of aristocratic carriages to shout "God Save the Queen." On the 6th November, the bill (which had been introduced on the 5th July) obtained a majority of a mere twenty-eight votes. First, the divorce clause was jettisoned ; then, three days later, the entire bill was abandoned. "The bill is gone, thank God ! to the devil," wrote Creevey from Brooks's, at three o'clock on the morning of November 10th. ". . . You may well suppose the state we are all in. . . . The state of the town is beyond everything."

Naturally, Madame de Lieven devoted much space to the affair of Queen Caroline ; but she did not omit to throw in a good deal of supplementary information ; and, when a revolution broke out in Naples, it was Madame de Lieven who passed on to the Austrian Chancellor the views of Castlereagh and Wellington, the latter being particularly anxious that Metternich should crush the Liberal movement by an immediate demonstration of armed force.

London, January 6, 1820.

I am going to do a really kind thing this morning. I am going to see the ex-favourite.¹ Her fall from favour is official. She was never very nice to me during her reign : now I shall revenge myself by being polite. . . .

We are still waiting for Paul.² What is keeping him in Vienna ? Your Paul is not responsible for his actions and he has no will of his own—he can always be led by anybody who takes the trouble. The Regent is very annoyed because he is bringing back his wife with him. He says that when a husband and wife do not get on together they should at

¹ The Marchioness of Hertford—the Regent's mistress.

² Prince Esterhazy, Austrian Ambassador in London.

least hide their domestic differences from the world. I suppose that is why the Princess of Wales has not lived at Carlton House for the last twenty years !

I have returned from my visit. I found several new wrinkles, a great show of cheerfulness and as much effrontery as there was once an air of mystery—it is always the way with fallen favourites. Incidentally, if I ever had any doubts, they would have been dispelled to-day. She overwhelmed me with protestations of friendship ; and I realised that in me she regretted an extremely harmless rival—one, moreover, from whom she was never in any sort of danger. Really, that woman is four times as big as I am—what a luxurious abundance of flesh ! . . .

Tuesday, January 25, 1820.

I was astonished to hear yesterday of the Duke of Kent's¹ death. That Hercules of a man is no more, while I—a slip of creature—am still alive and well ; from which I deduce that the weak go farther than the strong. No-one in England will mourn the Duke. He was false, hard and greedy. His so-called good qualities were only for show, and his last public appeal to the charity of the nation had lost him the support of the only friends he had—prisoners and City men. His wife kills all her husbands, though. She would cut an interesting figure now if she had it in her to do so ; but, whatever you may say, she is the most mediocre person it would be possible to meet.

January 29, 1820.

I had a long visit from Lady Hertford yesterday. She talks of nothing now but unhappy constancy and love. An

¹ Father of the future Queen Victoria. Creevey's account of his decision to marry and beget an heir is well known.

odd subject for her. Meanwhile, although we no longer live in the times when Mme de Pompadour directed the politics of Europe, I do not regard this London revolution as entirely without significance. Lord Castlereagh is a relative of the ex-favourite, and their connection put him on a more intimate footing with his master and gave him an added power. He is sulking now, and his sulks will strain their relations. One cannot tell what the ultimate effect will be. This is all petty backstairs politics ; I do not know why I have fallen into such a vein.

January 30.

Criers are announcing the death of the King in the streets ; on their hats they carry notices with the words "Death of the King" in big letters. As a matter of fact, he is not dead and it is treason to announce that he is ; so, to avoid the gallows, "of Abyssinia" is written in minute letters underneath. The English are really most ingenious when it comes to earning a few pence. Meanwhile, they are making a deafening noise about it ; at this moment, there are half a dozen of them blaring at their horns under my window—a nice way of waking people up. . . .

The King of Abyssinia, if there is one (which I don't know), is probably in perfect health, but the King of England is dead, really and truly dead this time. The news was brought to me as I was writing to you just now. He died yesterday evening at eight o'clock. The Duke of York was at his bedside. The Regent, now King, heard last night at Carlton House where he is ill with a bad cold. The King's death has no political importance, though it may have some effect on home affairs. There will have to be a new parliament, more elections, more fuss—a good excuse for it. Should there, or should there not, be a queen—that's an

extremely troublesome question. I am told on good authority that the Opposition has already sent a courier to her—an hour ago now. But I also happen to know that the present King does not want to give her the title ; and for this reason her name will not be mentioned in the Litany. People are saying that the Regent was extremely shocked and upset when he heard of his father's death. He was speechless for several minutes—the use of his tongue will soon come back.

Monday, January 31.

The new King's accession was on the exact anniversary of Charles I's execution (January 30), so the proclamation was put off until today. At this moment the heralds are announcing it in London. I love historical events, and I enjoy the excitement of what is happening now ; for, after all, it only means that there is one less poor, mad king in the world. But he will be mourned and regretted as though he had never been mad. Talking of madness, what an extraordinary race of people kings are ! In a congregation of eleven kings, what was the old Europe's record ? Before the arrival of all these brand-new monarchs, there were five lunatics—the Kings of England, Denmark, Sweden (William), our own Paul and the Queen of Portugal. What a privileged race ! And yet people are surprised that there are Jacobins. Still, I'm not a Jacobin myself.

Bright sunshine greets the opening of the new reign. I have not seen Wellington or the Duke of York since, so I do not know what is going to happen. The story of the Queen will be an odd one—for Queen she is ; she will have to be unqueened and only Parliament can do that.

Feb. 1820]

ILLNESS OF THE KING

February 2.

The King is very ill ; he has got an inflammation of the lungs. Heavens, if he should die ! Shakespeare's tragedies would pale before such a catastrophe. Father and son, in the past, have been buried together. But two kings ! I hope this one will recover. As for myself, I no sooner write that I am well than I fall ill, and no sooner announce a beautiful sunny day than the sun goes into an eclipse this morning before I have time to open my shutters. I didn't realise what was going on, but stayed in bed waiting for day ; which dawned pink, turned white, then blue and finally yellow. Even now, I am a bright lemon yellow hue. What lovely weather ! My cold keeps me in my room.

February 6.

The King is out of danger. The Ministers are much exercised about the proposals which they are to put before Parliament. The King wants a divorce at any price. They would sooner resign than have to deal with it ; but, at the same time, they realise that something must be done. They are going to propose a separation, to deprive her of a coronation and of the public honours to which a queen is entitled. . . .

February 9.

The Duke of York came yesterday to tell me of his father's last moments. He died in the ordinary way ; but, although the Duke did not realise it, to me it seemed from his story that the King regained his sanity for a moment. He said to the Duke of York : "*Frederick, give me your hand.*" When I told him what I thought, he said : "Oh no, he mistook me for somebody who is dead." He was allowed to fade out quietly ; he was given no remedy and he did not suffer at all. There is something poetic in the picture of this old, blind

king wandering about in his castle among shadows, talking with them ; for he lived his life among the dead—playing on his organ and never losing his serenity and his illusions. I really believe that, for the last nine years of his reign, he was the happiest man in his kingdom ; the saddest of all infirmities—blindness—had become for him the source of all his pleasures. Nothing could call him back to the world of reality, and his ideal world was full of all the pure joys that a gentle and pious fancy could invent. The King has been allowed to keep his beautiful white, bushy beard which descended to his chest. The Duke of York says he has as fine a rabbi's head as you could imagine.

Parliament will be dissolved at the end of this month, and the delicate and thorny questions at issue will wait for the new House—because new members are always more docile than the old. They have seven years to enjoy the good graces of the Court without having to fear their criticism. When the elections are at hand, it is another matter—you have to stop bothering about the Court and flatter the people. The Ministers are very downhearted. Castlereagh was dining here yesterday, his mood was as sombre as his clothes ; only our friend Wellington who goes on in his old way—he enjoyed chattering to my lady as much as to me. The King has not yet received Lord Castlereagh, and he has seen some of the others.

February 14.

Your no. 60 arrived yesterday. It followed close on the last, which I don't like, because it means that I shall have to wait all the longer to see the next one. I appreciate method, even in my pleasures ; they are those of a rather limited intelligence ; but that is because, whatever you may say, great intelligence is not really my strong point.

Feb. 1820]

THE FUNERAL AND DIVORCE

February 16.

It is the King's funeral today ; I wanted very much to attend the ceremony ; but ambassadors were not officially present, and my husband did not wish me to go. And now the Duchess of York, too, is very ill. Everyone has taken to dying this year. It is midday and I am writing by candle-light. There is a dense fog ; it is a real day of mourning ; the air is as funereal as the occasion.

I have set to work getting you your hydrogen gas lamp. They send such lamps here from Edinburgh ; but there have been accidents and they will not hold themselves responsible if the bearer takes fire instead of the wick. I have consulted one of the chief Ministers here. It is a little discouraging at the start, but I shall go on. To satisfy me, it is absolutely essential that the invention should be perfected, and I don't despair of obtaining for you the apparatus you want. Speaking of chemistry, there is much talk of a fusion of parties to form a new ministry—this is the latest rumour. Yesterday, the whole of London was full of it, and in great excitement. There is a little man (I begin like the fairy stories or the song) who is always with the King and goes on telling him from morning to night that a Whig ministry would undertake his divorce, whereas the present ministry evades the question. This little fellow is the Vice-Chancellor Leach, which is the English for *sangsue*, the tool of the Opposition and a man of wit. And the King thinks of nothing but divorce. My leech is a fact ; I have no confidence in the result ; but in a few days there will be talk of the affair in Parliament.

February 16.

I was very much upset yesterday to hear of the terrible catastrophe at the Opera in Paris.¹ He was not a very inter-

¹ The Duc de Berri, a younger son of the Comte d'Artois, the future Charles X, had been assassinated in the Paris opera-house on Feb. 13.

esting person ; but how dreadful for his wife ! 'Alas, one can't deny that nothing but the assassination of her husband before her very eyes could make her an object of interest. She is a hopeless nonentity. I knew the Duc de Berry well in England and I saw him again in France ; he was of no consequence, but he has been assassinated. France has seen him struck down and murdered ; and one is bound to feel concern and the deepest sympathy.

Paul Esterhazy arrived at six o'clock and talked a great deal. He interests me. I like the Viennese Paul ; but the London one will soon bore me. He is clever ; but he is childish ; and I do not like little boys of 34.

Doubtless, you know the story of the ministers. Last Monday, they offered their resignation in a body. The King hoped to find more docile ones ; it could not be done ; nobody, nobody except the Radicals would undertake his business. I believe that, if the Whig leaders had been in London, they would have made half-promises on the chance of getting into the saddle ; but time was short ; there was nobody to seize the chance ; the King gave in to the Ministers' arguments against the divorce, and the Ministers triumphed over the King and public opinion. This move has been particularly happy. If the whole affair is a trick, it is the best possible kind of trick ; there they are, stronger than ever because they have reassured the nation on a point of which it was doubtful—that they are capable of sacrificing their plans to their principles. I am very glad. Europe at this moment would have been very badly off with other Ministers. The King, too, is cunning—see what he has extorted from them. They have bound themselves to ask for a divorce if the Queen comes to England. They are confident of preventing her from coming. We shall see.

If you have not heard the details of the King's reconciliation with the Duke of Sussex, they are worth relating. Two

days before his accession the King was so ill that, if they had delayed bleeding him for half an hour, it might have killed him. At five o'clock in the morning, he sent for the Archbishop of Canterbury and told him that he had repeated the Lord's Prayer a hundred and ten times during the night ; that he hoped that might save him ; and that, since a sentence in the prayer urges the forgiving of trespasses, he wished to know whether, in forgiving the person who had most sinned against him, he would be performing a deed that would entitle him to survive. The man of God lost no time in encouraging him to this act of penitence ; and they sent at once for the Duke of Sussex, advising him not to speak, but to receive his brother's kiss in silence. The pantomime took place in the presence of the Duke of York.

February 24.

I have been married eighteen years today. How joyfully I left my convent, how delighted I was with my beautiful clothes, how well my wedding dress suited me, how pleased I was with my success when the Empress put some of her diamonds on me and took me in to the Emperor Paul, and he led me into his drawing-room to show me to his Court ! I should have liked to get married every day, and I thought about everything, except that I was taking a husband.

Friday, February 25.

What a horrible thing, a general massacre of the entire Cabinet !¹ What a monstrous idea ! I am not going out yet, and Lady Harrowby came yesterday morning to tell me about it. Her husband had confided the plot to her and told her that it was to be executed while all the Cabinet ministers

¹ The Cato Street Conspiracy, organized by Arthur Thistlewood and his confederates.

were assembled for dinner at their house. She and her children had left. She showed astonishing courage ; for, after all, the precautions might miscarry ; but nobody could detect the slightest sign of weakness. This hideous catastrophe had already been planned to occur last Tuesday at a dinner at Lord Westmorland's. You know there is a Cabinet dinner every Tuesday. That day, Lord Castlereagh asked himself to dinner, which surprised us a little. The Duke of Wellington then told me they had thought that the public might disapprove of a dinner so soon after the death of the King. If dinner is a dissipation, I feel that dining with us involved a greater degree of gaiety than dining with Lord Westmorland. However, I paid no attention ; but I believe I told you that, that day, Castlereagh looked like a man who had just been hung.

The details of this frightful conspiracy are so revolting that one can scarcely believe that human beings like ourselves, with head and hands and feet, conceived such an abominable project. I got Wellington to tell me about the whole affair. Besides all the details to be read in the papers, there are some which have not appeared, including the manner in which the work was to be distributed. Thistlewood had chosen Wellington as his victim. There had been a long fight over Castlereagh. Everybody wanted the honour of cutting his throat. For little Vansittart there were fewer candidates. Two of the gang were to cut off the heads ; a third held the bag in which they were to be carried. From Lord Harrowby's house, they were to proceed to the Bank and seize it ; take possession of six cannons placed in the Artillery ground ; then, by proclamations prepared beforehand, which are in the hands of the Ministers, they were to invite the populace and the army to join them ; to announce the downfall of tyranny ; and to constitute themselves the government of the people.

There is an enormous proscription list, including well-to-do families, citizens of all classes, and even foreigners. I feel cold from head to foot, thinking of those men. The conspirators' assignation had been changed to seven o'clock on Wednesday evening, and the pass-word changed too, so that up to the last minute the Ministers did not know if their measures would be successful. Fortunately, their spy was on his guard. Every half-hour, they had a new hiding-place. The spy shared in the plot. Finally, at half-past eight they were caught, as you have heard. Cato Street is not far from where we live. I suppose that in their choice of residence, these Brutuses must have been influenced by a taste for antiquity.

March 1.

Thank you for liking Lady Granville¹ without knowing her. You run no risk of being bored when you make her acquaintance. Heavens, how witty she is ! People think she is malicious ; but reputations of that kind are established so quickly, and, just as with a woman's frailties, they are always so readily accepted, that I pay no attention to them. How much better the world would be if people were kinder. But how easy it is to think ill—and what an effort it requires to take the opposite view !

Every day, they arrest some more of the conspirators ; but there are still some who defy the vigilance of the police ; it is frightful to feel that these assassins are yet in our midst. The other day, at dinner with Lord Castlereagh, there were constables in the house, and Lord Castlereagh himself had two loaded pistols in the pockets of his breeches. He showed them to me at table. I was nervous every time he made a

¹ Daughter of the Duchess of Devonshire : authoress of a delightful volume of letters : Madame de Lieven's greatest friend. She is usually referred to as "my friend." She is to be distinguished from "my friend on the Continent," the Duchess of Cumberland.

movement to offer me anything ; I sat sideways on my chair ; I edged away from the left and got so near to my right-hand neighbour that he could put nothing in his mouth without elbowing me. It was Paul who was just as nervous as I was when I told him I had seen those fearful pistols. Gradually, hunger reasserted itself at the expense of terror, and I ended by eating as usual. Our friend Wellington takes no precautions. He shows himself too much, and everybody knows that he is always followed. That night, there was a frightful storm and the chimney of my bedroom was blown down. I cannot imagine how these wretched London houses stand up. It is estimated that the house in which we live will come down in twenty years' time. Ordinarily, they are built for a certain number of years. It is fifty years since a Russian Minister purchased our house from the Crown, and it was then twenty years old. Since its life is given at ninety years, we are now in a process of rapid decline.

Lady Jersey came yesterday to ask me to dine ; she chattered so hard that she lost her voice. She is more bitter than ever against the Ministers and very indulgent towards the King. She was still hoping to win him over, and the little leech is working to that end with all his might. However, Wellington told me the other day that they were going to get rid of little Leach, because he was causing all the trouble.

Paul Esterhazy is waiting for his wife. I have seen him and I treat him as a friend. He is a strange man. One day he adores me, the next I am quite his enemy ; and, if he were to be told that I was dead, he would think it ancient history, so completely do I go out of his mind. He is afraid of you ; that is why you see him in a different light from ordinary people. But the rest of humanity for him are like the actors on the stage—no sooner has he left his box than he has forgotten them.

I have been obliged to promise the Duke of Wellington

to visit him in the country tomorrow. You have no idea how much it bores me and puts me out. He has unfortunately taken it into his head that his house is the most comfortable in the world. Well, there are two very definite drawbacks to that comfort. It is always cold there, and his wife is stupid. What's to be done ?

March 7.

The fogs have given me a fever, and I am threatened with having to stay in bed. I am afraid that the fever will be like the toothache which stops as soon as one is in the presence of the dentist—it will leave me when I am faced with the misery of going to bed. Prince Philippe of Homburg, whose arrival you announce, I shall be charmed to see again. I know Count Wr̄bna too. I cannot forgive him his four consecutive consonants. But never mind, I shall be nice to anyone who comes from you—provided that I am not in bed, for all good humour stops at my bedroom door.

Have you read the seventh issue of the historical documents ? That is not what it is called, but you know what I mean—Bonaparte's official correspondence. The last part is the best. Stiyntich is given away ; and our worthy, half-cunning, half-stupid Romanzoff appears in the conference with Savary. I was dying to find one of your despatches, but your archives were more secret than those of Prussia. Nevertheless, there is something of Stadion there, and something of Wessenberg. I was so much interested that I talk to you as if you, too, had read it last night. Good night, *mon Prince*, you are at your desk ; but, as you see, I have no scruples : the vagaries of Capo d'Istria,¹ British opinion,

¹ Count Capo d'Istria, a native of Corfu who rose to be one of the directors of Russian foreign policy. He was an extremely capable diplomatist, though said to be somewhat biased by his interest in the cause of Greek freedom. Known by Madame de Lieven and Metternich as "the man with the apocalyptic style" or "St. John."

Vincent's gloomy reports—they mean nothing at all to me. I aspire to the honour of being, for one moment, the rival of a reunited Europe.

March 11.

I did something silly yesterday and I feel much better today—that is always the result when I behave stupidly. In this world, as a rule, virtue goes unrewarded; the opposite policy is more successful. Here am I dropping into a philosophical dissertation about a dinner party that I attended when my doctor wanted me to stay in bed. I was suddenly seized with a horror of bed and a violent desire to be entertained by the wit of a man who has plenty of wit to spare and who was dining with my husband. His gaiety cleared up the worst of my cold. So, in future, I shall forgo syrups and take to witticisms as a more reliable cure.

The elections are in full swing, and I am very much afraid that Hobhouse¹ may get a seat in Parliament. If he is elected, you know, he will owe it to that madwoman Lady Caroline Lamb.² It is well known that last year she was worth more than a thousand votes to her brother-in-law George Lamb, one of the candidates for Westminster, who succeeded Sir Samuel Romilly. There are no two opinions about the price at which the majority of those votes were bought. She made no bones about going into taverns and dancing and drinking with the electors: what else she did is shrouded in obscurity. Anyway, she put such energy into her canvassing that, in the end, her brother-in-law defeated Hobhouse himself. Burdett, the latter's patron, admits that it was she who deserved all the credit for Lamb's election.

Eight months ago, Hobhouse published a libel against the

¹ John Cam Hobhouse, friend of Byron.

² Lady Caroline Lamb, best known through her association with Byron.

House of Commons. As a result he was clapped into Newgate Jail. Lady Caroline, from a taste for the unconventional, went to see Hobhouse, whom she did not know at all, in prison. He is said to be handsome and witty. They came to an understanding, and Hobhouse made her promise not to canvass for her brother-in-law. Preparations were on foot for the Westminster election. Burdett got Hobhouse out of prison, and here he is appearing at meetings, and three hundred votes ahead of Lamb. Lady Caroline has decamped. People have no idea to what an extent women influence the elections in England.

March 19. Brighton.

I came here yesterday; the journey made me worse, but a kind of quack doctor did me good, and I am hoping that a few days of sea air will cure my cold on the chest. In the meantime, I am shut up indoors; I have books and the view of the sea. Why are you not in England, why have you not got a cold, and why should you not be in Brighton staying at the same inn? I have neighbours. Why are you not my neighbour? It would all be very simple. But I am letting myself become foolish. I call it foolish to dwell upon the impossible. You have had a Germanic congress, and I a popular election; they are not much alike. Just now, you cannot take a step in Brighton without running up against a "such a one for ever." I am "in" with the "Cavendish for ever" gang. They bawl it at my door; they bawl it in the streets; and one half of the population of Brighton . . . is wearing pink ribbons, and the other half blue ribbons. The Cavendishes are pink, their opponents blue. There is a bustle and hubbub that would be great fun for little children. I have the misfortune no longer to be a child, and the future legislators of the nation give me a headache. . . .

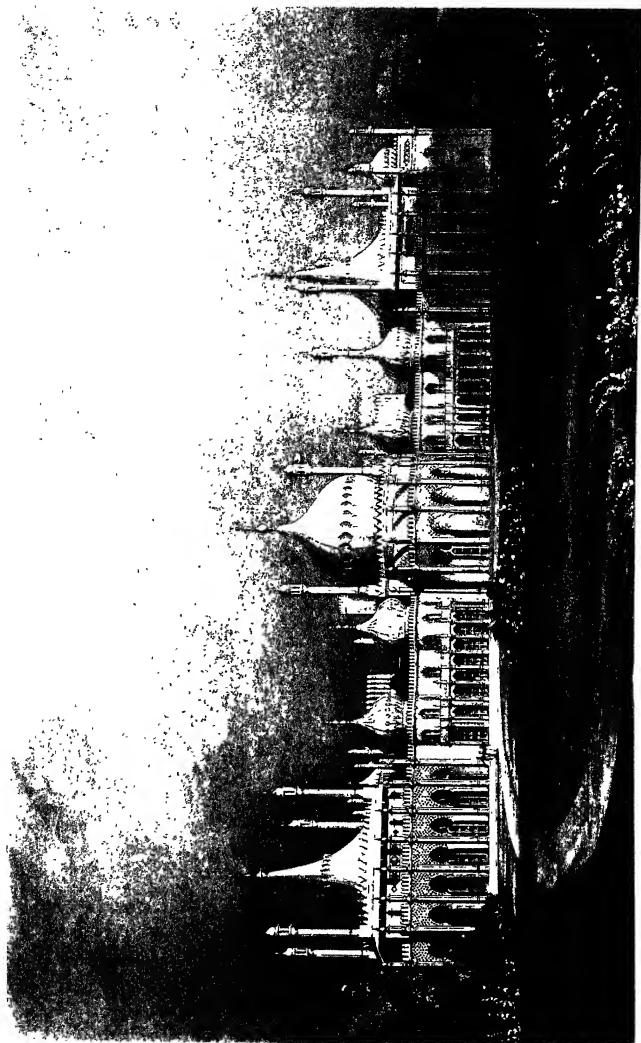
In the middle of all this, the King occupies a little house

(houses would be more exact) two hundred yards from his palace, or pavilion, or Kremlin, or mosque—for it bears all these names and deserves them—quite alone, without means of receiving anybody, since his lodging is no bigger than a parrot's cage.

I dined with Paul the day before I left London ; he gave me your writing-desk, for which I thank you. He said to me as he showed it me : "No-one knows." I replied, "You did not tell me that it was a secret, and I have told my husband." He stared in astonishment—I disconcert him twenty times a day. Talking of him, his household seems to be going on well. But what a mediocre person his wife is, and what pretensions to airs and graces ! Do you know the kind of woman who always wants to be the centre of social interest ? She is afraid of mice, she loves cats, she tumbles down, she burns herself, she upsets her tea on her dress—all this happened in her house the other day. In short, she must at all costs be the focus of interest and general attention. Still, these are graceful blunders. The most serious seems to me to be—talking sentiment. I find it much more natural for her to fall down on a perfectly smooth carpet. All the same, that was an odd fall she had the other day. How different English education is from Continental ! Englishwomen, it is true, are wanting in grace, but they have, even the youngest of them, a certain good sense which makes them always steer clear of the ridiculous. But I am thinking too much about education. It is a long time since I finished mine ; and I have never had enough brains to put me in a position to educate anyone else. What a pity ! I am sure that my daughter would have been a charming person.

March 20.

Heavens, what a fuss ! Since yesterday the pinks have got the upper hand over the blues, and it is worse than ever. I



The Pavilion at Brighton, from an illustration by John Nash

am very glad nevertheless to see a provincial election ; it is quite different from London. There you see the election itself, here the machinery at work ; and no book would do justice to the present spectacle. Everything is turned to account, women and children too ; there is a whole technique of attack, defence and knock-out ; there is systematic bribery and, in the midst of it all, a regular saturnalia. The proud aristocrat shakes the butcher by the hand, gives sweets to his children, bonnets to his wife, and ribbons to the whole family, and so on, down to dead animals—for the butcher is careful to decorate his meat with pink ribbon. There are probably eight thousand cockades of that colour in Brighton. Everything which displays them is greeted with cheers, everything which does not—with mud and boos. Cheers and insults follow one another and are mingled in the oddest way. What a strange country ! What a strange and beautiful thing its Constitution is ! What a mixture of justice and abuses, what contrasts everywhere and in everything, and yet what a fine harmony results from all these contrasts ! You do not feel drawn towards Constitutions. But you must let me go on liking them in the form sanctified by the English weather and the English fogs.

Well, well ! So Ferdinand is a constitutional monarch :¹ what a clever thing he thinks he has done, what an example for amateurs ! In forty years' time, the whole of Europe will be constitutional. You will hold out among the last ; but you will be included. What a strange century we live in ! No sooner does one think one has come to the end of a difficulty, than a dozen more spring up under one's feet like weeds. It is a wretched job, to be a king or a minister.

We have news from St. Petersburg. Capo d'Istria seems to me very nervous about the outcome of his transaction

¹ The King of Spain, who had granted a constitution to his subjects.

over the Islands.¹ He feels himself compromised. What will he say and do when he has the answers of the English Government to his memorandum? If you have not got that document, get Paul to send it you, for it has been drawn up; I have no notion how he will get out of it with the Emperor Alexander.

London, the 25th.

We came back yesterday; it was high time to leave Brighton. The pinks lost the election, and the populace were so infuriated by their defeat that they attacked all the houses suspected of ministerialism; and we found ourselves forced to close the shutters in full daylight for fear of being hit by splinters of broken glass.

Walmoden is leaving today; it would be a good opportunity to write to you; but these few trivial lines do not deserve the honour of such an ambassador. I saw some people yesterday evening; there are so many foreigners stranded here that I took pity on them. The English are half in the country, half in the back part of their houses with their shutters closed on the street side, so that they shall not be suspected of bad form for being in town at an unfashionable season. Walmoden is annoyed at meeting so few pretty women here. All the same, I showed him some extremely beautiful ones. How do likes and dislikes come into being? I have often struggled with the tendency in myself to take an aversion to certain people about whom I really need never think at all. M. Walmoden is one of them. Do you know the meaning of the English word "conceited"? It means at once priggish, self-important, contemptuous of others; that is how Walmoden appeared to me yesterday, for the first and

¹ The Ionian Islands, where Capo d'Istria had formerly held administrative posts.

last time that I have seen him. Nevertheless, I should have liked him to have a good opinion of me ; but it was impossible for me to make an effort to seem pleasant. He has a centrifugal force which freezes me. Your Hesse Homburg is more open. Talking of him, he finds my husband more amusing than me ; they have a common interest in soldiers and reviews—it works admirably. Your young men seem to me good sorts, not very brilliant, especially Stadion. He talks too much, and he has nothing to say—the other is quieter. The whole Austrian colony is bored ; London is very dismal—for me, it is always equally colourless.

London, April 1, 1820.

I did not write to you yesterday. I spent the day at my devotions—it was a long time since I had performed that duty. One ought never to do so except when one feels the call. It is the same with this as with all the actions of life which have charm only when they are voluntary. It is a profanation to make of a religious act a matter of habit ; if one does, one brings to it none of the feelings which make of that act a consolation, a pleasure. Yesterday I experienced all the sensations of happiness and faith which constitute true religion.

We have come to Strathfield-Saye to dine ; the Austrian colony is here too. The house is ugly and the park rather barren. Your poor Hesse has a “Hexenschusz” ; he is in an odious temper. He hates England, everything irritates and bores him, and it is such a general feeling with him that I am sure he hates me. I do what I can to make him feel differently. He does not even notice I am trying—what a pity ! I am sure he will tell you that I am an unpleasant person. When the Duke called him to put him beside me at table, you have no idea with what repugnance he came to

take his chair, how he let the conversation drop, how short his answers were. The food did not distract him ; he eats nothing ; for he is ill—I am still vain enough to put his dislike down to his rheumatism.

The Duke took me into his study ; there were two portraits in there, one of Lady Charlotte Greville and one of Mrs. Paterson, the American. How can one have two passions at the same time, and how can one bear to parade them before the world at large ?

Here black is always seen next to white : great regard for manners, beside great boldness of conduct. You cannot appear in front of a woman except in shoes and stockings, but you do not bother to offer her your chair. I am going to sulk like the Prince of Hesse. What a strange country ! I have been here eight years, and every day I find something to be surprised at.

April 5.

All our company scattered yesterday ; we brought Palmella¹ back to London. I stopped a moment at Oatlands to see the Duchess of York, whom I found in a moribund condition. She looks as if she no longer had a breath of life. Seeing me revived her for a second ; but I was so struck by the change in her that I could not stay more than a few minutes at her bedside. How sad to die as she will—absolutely alone ! She has nobody but a confidential maid. The Duke goes to see her for an hour every week : that is all. When I left her I went to rejoin my company, who had gone, while they were waiting, to amuse themselves with the monkeys and parrots. There are a score of each of these creatures close to her apartment—the only voices that break the silence of her solitude. Heavens—a whole life spent like that !

¹ Count Palmella represented Portugal at the Court of St. James.

Today they are carrying Burdett and Hobhouse through the streets in triumph. I saw Burdett like this two years ago ; it is a fine sight. To me there is no doubt of it, a crowd is a beautiful and impressive spectacle. These cheers are mere flattery ; they are given and withheld so quickly and for so little cause ; but it is none the less true that a hundred thousand voices shouting "Long Live Burdett !" produced in me a quite extraordinary emotion, and that I envied the man on whom were lavished the prayers, the love, the hopes of so many of his fellow human beings. He was in a Roman chariot, towering high above the rest of humanity.

Lord Lonsdale has left ; nobody knows why or for what destination ; but rumour says, on a secret mission from the King to the Queen's brother, unknown to his Ministers. That is Opposition news ; I can tell you they have great hopes, and what is more, that they are right to hope ; for the brother of the present favourite is a rabid Whig.

How, *mon Prince*, did you come to think of using my letters in a report ? I am overwhelmed by the honour you do them. Did I give you any news ? I never know what I write to you ; I tell you everything at random. They must make an odd collection, my letters to you, and the relationship between us is in itself odd. As a result of seeing one another for a week, two years ago, here we are engaged in an intimate correspondence which ought to imply a whole lifetime of daily contacts. Some day, if our letters are read, people will wonder what we were about—whether it was love or politics. It is not a question of passing the time, for you have none to waste. In fact, I do not really know what we are at. I see no great danger in continuing our romance, for we shall remain five hundred leagues apart ; and, since we have enough intelligence for this kind of amusement, let us go on. The writers of romances would be hard put to it to make one up on our model.

We were to go and spend a few days with Lord Essex in the country. The arrival of M. de Lavashoff prevents us—it is the only good thing about his arrival. He is like all Russians. What always amuses me is the astonishment of my friends from the glacial zone when, by some very simple phrase, I first set it down in principle that their gallantries are wasted on myself. They think themselves in duty bound to begin by addressing them to me ; the illusion ceases after twenty-four hours. I immediately let loose on them three or four chattering little women whom I always hold in reserve for these occasions, who seize on them and do exactly what I want them to do in a drawing-room. My boobies tumble straight into the trap ; they fall in love and are quite surprised that, in the end, it turns out to mean absolutely nothing. But their stay has slipped past without my intervention ; and they leave equally full of their own successes and of English virtue. In this way, everybody is satisfied.

April 12.

Yesterday, I went to a large ball at the Duke of Devonshire's in the country. A rich and eligible man can, if he likes, play the tyrant in England. It amused the Duke to make everyone come to his house on a very dark and rainy night, and to give a ball six miles from London, when he has a beautiful town house—and everyone went ; and I who have no intention of securing him as a husband, I went too. But I did not leave like the others ; when the ball began I retired to nod in my carriage, which was so comfortable that I was quite put out at having to leave it for my bed. Today, I am so tired from lack of sleep that I feel I have not the energy to go to another ball.

Parliament is getting ready ; the elections are over. The Government has lost a few votes, which even the Opposition did not expect. Moreover, it is not they whose ranks have been strengthened ; but seats in a few constituencies have fallen

into the hands of the Radicals ; and, divided on principle as these two parties may be, they are united in their opposition to every Government measure. There is nothing more different, moreover, than a Whig from a Radical. They are aristocracy and democracy personified. Lady Jersey is violent against Burdett, Hobhouse, etc. ; only the Russell family, the proudest and the richest in England, of which the Duke of Bedford is head, is wholly on the side of Radicalism. Lord John, his third son, is the boldest democrat possible ; he is an intelligent man.

It seems to me that your congress must be finished. Send me a report ; since you have done with your big-wigs, it is a good thing to keep up one's old habits. Might it not happen one day that you ceased being Minister ? What sort of a face do you make when you think of that ? Surely, after an existence as busy as yours, you might, without regret or boredom, resign yourself to mere everyday happiness ? My last phrase savours of paradox ; all the same, it is quite accurate. Your rôle, *mon Prince*, is the most dangerous of habits. It does not give happiness, but I am very much afraid that it may prevent you from enjoying happiness in any other form.

How stupid an English courtier can be ! Lawrence's portrait gallery has just arrived. And what happens but he must take it into his head to treat paintings of great men as he would treat the originals if he were their major-domo ! You cannot be shown my portrait before you have made your bow to the King. I did not know that portraits were subject to etiquette. . . .

The sun, a rare accident in England, has been shining here for several days. I prefer the fog and the rain ; they have a more definite character. Foggy weather offers no disturbing contrast ; England is then frankly depressing. Clumsy attempts at gaiety do not suit it at all ; like all pretensions they seem awkward and out of place.

April 19.

For some days, I have been without a letter from you ; as I thought, an accident was the cause ; and it seems highly probable that it was here they found time to read it. It was held up four days ; at the end of which time I received it in the condition you will see, for I am sending you the envelope. I have complained to the Duke of Wellington. He always tries to persuade me that this sort of thing happens in Paris. The reward of curiosity, in the present instance, will have been the discovery that the Archduke Regent still needs your advice, and that you are equal to giving it in all circumstances.

The poor Duchess of York is dying. Her husband came again to dine with me yesterday. We talked much about marriageable German princesses : this is going much too fast. I leave for a morning of rushing around. I let my duty calls accumulate, and then I sacrifice a London morning to returning them ; and between two and four o'clock one gets the job done. How much better I like calls in the morning than in the evening ! This last inconvenience is quite unknown in London. On the whole, there is something to be said for the habits of society here. The English are, at the same time, formal and easy, as Shakespeare is tragic and comic on the same page. I often wonder, *mon Prince*, how we shall look when we see one another again ; we have become so familiar at a distance that we have reached the point that one arrives at, I imagine, after twenty years of habit ; and, apart from our passion for writing, we have not a single habit in common. How did we get the idea of thinking of one another, and how did the first illusion concerning our destinies come into being ? Lady Granville assures me that it is the most intelligent action of my life ¹—I have sometimes thought that the epithet was inexact. She is never tired of telling me that, so long as we

¹ "l'action de ma vie la plus spirituelle." The double-meaning does not lend itself to an English rendering.

April 1820]

ROYAL BOREDOM

stay at the opposite ends of Europe, our story will be for her the ideal of happiness. She assures me further that, if she had not a husband whom she adored, she would immediately adopt a dead lover, because absence and death make a romance so respectable. It is true, no couple could behave more correctly than we do.

Yesterday, I spent the evening in a very hot drawing-room. I should have been bored if I had not met Paul Esterhazy, who has the exclusive privilege of making me laugh. I should like to laugh with your Homburg too ; but it is not possible. He always makes such deep bows and opens conversation with a preamble as long as the preface to a book and as boring as the majority of prefaces. One has no time in London drawing-rooms to go through formalities—you have to broach the subject frankly, or else confine yourself to “how hot” or “how full.” The Prince of Hesse’s manners are too good for England. You have no idea how I have succeeded in cutting short ordinary civilities ; time in England has a different value from time on the Continent.

I dined yesterday with all the royal family, except the King, who has gone to Windsor, and I was royally bored. In the evening, I went to a very ostentatious party at Lady Sandwich’s. We laughed, Paul and I, at the affectations of the mistress of the house. She wants to marry that Lord Cowes about whom I spoke to you the other day, but he does not want to. That is the trouble.

April 26.

Neumann¹ has just let me know that there is a good opportunity of getting this letter to you ; since it is safe, I had best begin. *Mon Prince*, the King is a dangerous madman.

¹ Esterhazy’s secretary : he seems to have been in Madame de Lieven’s confidence and certainly arranged for her letters to be despatched to Metternich. Author of an extremely interesting Diary.

His new passion has turned his head. I have already told you, I think, that the Marchioness of Conyngham is the sister of a Mr. Dennison, a member of Parliament, rich, influential, and ultra-*Opposition* ; that she is a fool and just the kind of malicious fool who might do a great deal of harm. I do not know what the Ministers hope or believe ; but I am sure that the King is deceiving them, that he is making his plans secretly, and that one fine day there will be new Ministers in place of the old. Münster¹ is making mischief ; he supports the King in his hopes of divorce in order to reduce him to powerlessness—thus he eggs him on against his Ministers, who will not hear of it. Doubtless, the *Opposition* gives only half-promises ; for the question could not be raised without dragging the King through the mud ; but they promise enough, and their opponents little enough, for the King to be taken in. That is how things stand. Little Leach pays secret visits to the King every day ; I have already told you about him. In short, although this is a constitutional kingdom, it will soon be nothing more nor less than an oriental throne. A regular revolution may change the whole aspect of politics. All sensible people regret Lady Hertford ; and, even though there were nothing worse about his affair than its absurdity, can one imagine anything more absurd than an amorous and inconstant sexagenarian who, at the beginning of his reign, gives up all his time to a love affair ? It is pitiable.

April 28.

Tonight, I dreamed that I had a letter from you. You gave me a rendezvous in New Orleans. I started at once. I arrived ; I could not find you ; no-one had seen

¹ Hanoverian minister. Like other members of his family, George IV was deeply attached to his Hanoverian possessions and, at times, threatened to retire there.

you ; but Bolivar, whom I had also sent out on his travels, promised to despatch a ship to look for you. Why does one dream such foolish things ? Often I write poetry in my sleep. I even write good poetry, and I pause in dreaming to admire my achievement. I understand this perfectly ; the action of the mind must be freer when the body is at rest ; and here is an effective method of discovering my genius. But why are occurrences of just the opposite kind more frequent ?

May 1.

The conspirators, Thistlewood and Co., were hanged an hour ago ; and, at the moment, the streets are full of music, of drums and of people in masks. It is the festival of the chimney-sweeps, and they are dancing at every corner. It makes me sad. Do not imagine that I regret the fate of Thistlewood ; I feel pity for these poor human beings, for these aberrations of mind and imagination. I do not believe in the existence of a human being evil at heart ; that would be to doubt the Creator. A false exaltation—such is the motive of crime. Why did Brant die crying, “Long live liberty !” ? Why did that emotion dominate him at the moment of saying good-bye ? Even in him the emotion is not criminal.

I see from your letters, *mon Prince*, that you are extremely busy and extremely worried. You tread a path very different from the path of happiness. You know it, and yet you continue to tread it. Ambition—that is a man’s happiness—your intellect seeks that path ; your heart rejects it. Was there ever a man who arranged his life so as to be happy ? Men wear out existence in promising themselves happiness and tranquillity. They reckon with everything except the flight of time, and end their days when they are making ready to enjoy. How discordant are our intellects and our wills ! In each of us, what virtues and what littlenesses !

The new favourite appeared yesterday in society for the first time since her accession ; and I enjoyed a new light on the English character. Everyone seemed embarrassed. Nobody wanted to be the first to greet her ; there was at least five minutes' suspense, painful for her and for the others. She is a nice enough woman and, as such, welcome, so that after a few moments she secured a few "How do you do's"—but she was not received cordially, as she was last year. That will come ; one gets accustomed to everything.

My mind is full of the Emperor's order about the descendants of the Grand Duke Constantine.¹ I knew about the divorce ; I did not know the sequel. Well, if there are children, this sequel will be the source of long civil wars in Russia, and her neighbours will not be displeased. Castlereagh said the other day to my husband what a pity it was that in England we could not give out an ukase from an Emperor Alexander. Good-bye, *mon Prince*.

I suppose this letter will find you at a wedding. Since we have known one another, you do nothing but make marriages and congresses ; the former are more amusing than the latter. I do not envy the fate of the Princess de Carignan, after the picture you draw of the Archduke.

Camden Place, May 20.

Be sure, *mon Prince*, to read the proceedings of a tribunal called the "Court of Claims," which has just been set up to consider the claims of the hereditary vassals of the Crown on the occasion of the Coronation. This tribunal is very important ; it is composed of princes of the blood, the first peers of the realm, and learned jurists, and it has to consider the most comical claims in the world, that is to say, to grant them ; for everything will be done as in the time of Edward

¹ Owing to the Grand-Duke's morganatic marriage, his descendants were barred from the succession.

May 1820]

HEREDITARY PRIVILEGES

the Confessor. Here are some of the privileges attaching to certain families. Lord Harrington is summoned at midnight to the door of the King's bedroom, and has to crow like a cock. The owner of a certain estate in Buckinghamshire has to present the King with two young ladies destined to amuse His Majesty. There were long discussions at the Coronation of George III to decide if this due was to be exacted, in view of the fact that there was a Queen, and one quite recently acquired too. The privilege was put aside for that occasion only. It goes back to William the Conqueror, if not further.

M. de Rostopchine¹ has just arrived, the man who made Europe ring with his name in the year 12. Madame de Staël said of him that he had wit *à la tartare*. I did not find the phrase felicitous ; on the contrary, he has a great deal of that French wit which is so amusing in a drawing-room. His ideas are original, but he evades you every time if you get him on to more serious ground. I do not know if you know him ; he would amuse you.

Do you know, and would you believe it, that the King will be obliged to hire the crown that will be placed on his head at his Coronation, and that it has been the same with all the coronations of the princes of Brunswick ? It is paid for at so much an hour.

May 30.

Yesterday for the first time in my life I found myself at a dinner with Lady Conyngham. She used not to belong to the kind of society one invites to dinner ; but the situation has changed now in certain houses. I was curious after dinner, when the women are left to themselves for a good hour, to get her to talk, to find out *primo*, how she talks, and secondly, what about. *Ad primo* (to adopt the manner

¹ Military governor of Moscow at the time of Napoleon's Russian campaign.

of St. John of the Apocalypse, as you call Capo d'Istria), badly, and *ad secundum*, against the Ministers. I got what I wanted, and I was caught.

June 2.

I spent an amusing day yesterday. The King had invited us to Windsor; we went to join him at the Ascot races in the morning. There were about twenty thousand gaping onlookers—he did not get a very good reception. He talked to me a long time about his wife, whom he calls the Princess of Wales, and said on the subject of the difficulties the woman causes him: “How lucky that my daughter is dead! How much worse even this affair would have been for me if she had lived!”; I was disgusted by the remark. When I had recovered a little from my intense indignation, I replied that I thought he was wrong, that Princess Charlotte, during her latter days, was not bent on protecting her mother, and that she had said to me on one occasion: “As soon as I am Queen, I shall have my mother shut up, because she is mad.” There’s filial affection for you, worthy of its paternal counterpart. What a family! However that may be, he was delighted by what I told him, and seemed to be making a mental note of it.

When we left the races, the three of us got into the carriage, the King, Lady Conyngham and I. We were overtaken by a storm—I could tell you a pretty story about that return journey; I had nothing to distract my attention. When we got back to the cottage, I was unlucky enough to give the King a regular attack of nerves. It was a long time since he had heard the piano. As we had some time before dinner, he begged me to do as I used in the old days. I played; he was overcome, and for five minutes could not speak. At the end of that time, a flood of tears relieved his feelings. I have never seen a man more in love.



George IV, from a portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence

There is great alarm here about the arrival of the Queen. It is inconceivable to me that they will not find some way of preventing her coming. The minority, in which the Ministers found themselves the other day, will say nothing. It was by a surprise attack, as Lord Castlereagh firmly believes, that that division was taken. He did not suspect that it would be put to the vote, and at four o'clock in the morning the Government supporters had gone to dance or to bed. The landed proprietors voted for the motion, because they have a personal interest in the rise of the price of wheat. The most ardent oppositionists joined the Ministers in deploring the result of the ballot, which proves that it is not a party question. To raise at this moment a question about the people's food is to expose oneself voluntarily to all the dangers they are trying to avoid. Very wisely the Ministry tried next day at least to set limits to the investigation ; and Parliament, also very wisely, accorded the Ministers a huge majority. The amusing thing about the first resolution is that nobody was more astonished and disturbed by its success than the author of the motion.

Today, I had a long and solemn dinner at Lord Liverpool's. He amused us by the odd fancy that took him after dinner of jumping over the back of a big sofa, on which I was seated, and establishing himself on a little footstool in front of me. The great Liverpool hovered and then settled on the ground, looking very comic. It is the common joke in this circle of society that he takes a very great interest in me ; I quite like Prime Ministers.

The King's old flame was at dinner. I had to put up with her complaints, her tears, her anger—in fact, explicit confidences about her sufferings. All that is understandable, and, in her place, I should certainly have thought it all (without saying it, however) ; but what I should have neither said, nor have thought, is that she finds the new love ridiculous

in view of the age of the contracting parties. I had great difficulty in keeping a straight face at this point of the story. She is 63 and Lady Conyngham 45. All the same, she is a woman of sense. The thing which has surprised me is the ease with which one loses such sense as one has just at the moment when it is most necessary to show it. I sometimes think that we are specially stupid, and that common sense occurs only by accident.

They think here that Rostopchine is frightful. I notice that in England the worst of misfortunes is to have a vulgar nose ; it is a crime for which there is no forgiveness. They do not find him funny as yet ; but that will come, because he is.

June 5.

The only topic of conversation here is the arrival of the Queen ; she is known to be at St. Omer ; but, even so, I doubt if she will come. Brougham has gone to meet her, to dissuade her from coming. On this question at least, if not on the side of the Ministers, he is entirely of their opinion ; and it is on him that they count most to prevent a scandal. Wood will use all his influence to bring her to England. All we want in this country is a Radical Queen.

June 6.

That woman has had the unbelievable impudence to come to London ; she will be here in an hour. I was dining yesterday with Lady Conyngham when in comes Bloomfield and announces that pretty piece of news. The hostess jumped for joy because, she said, this will decide the affair. Yes ; but, before it is decided, what a to-do, what dangers ! One cannot ignore the huge section of the public which is for the Queen ; in the eyes of the English people, she is a pure and

innocent victim. Alderman Wood, who manages the Queen and also manages the London populace, is going to make a fine use of his influence.

The King is going to Parliament today to give his sanction to the bill authorising the civil list, at the very moment the Queen is due to arrive in London, and by the very streets through which the Royal procession will pass. A meeting seems to me so fraught with peril that I still cannot believe he will run the risk. The Ministers have spent the night in council, and today the Act of Degradation is to be brought before Parliament. Today, I should not like to be either the King or the Ministers, or even a member of Parliament ; for it is possible that the mob may move to the House.

The 6th, evening.

The King went to Parliament. The mob neither cheered nor booed. There scarcely was any mob ; everybody had gone to meet the Queen. She arrived late. She passed by the Houses of Parliament at the moment when the Ministers were proposing to set up a secret committee to examine her conduct. The gauntlet has been thrown down. It is said that the King is very pleased about all this. He has laid a nice burden on the shoulders of his Ministers, and now he says, "Let them get out of it." The Queen is staying with Wood. . . . The mob streamed through the streets all night with torches, making passers-by shout, "Long live the Queen !" You can imagine London at this moment : what a stir, what excitement, what noise !

I am very much afraid we may reach the crisis which I have long feared ; I have told you of my anxiety on this score. The Ministers are in a most dangerous position. They have put up a glorious fight against a hostile Europe ; they have triumphed over the greatest difficulties, foreign and

domestic, that have ever confronted a government ; and now they are going to be defeated by a woman. They are battling against public opinion and against their master himself ; this double adversary will end by crushing them. The infamous publications of Wood, on the proposals made by Hutchinson¹ at St. Omer, have produced the most unfortunate impression against the Court and the Government. Read the *Times*, since the 5th inclusive ; everything is there. If I am serious today, it is because all this distresses me. To amuse you I will add that the Queen, passing by Carlton House, stopped the procession and herself waved her fair hand, crying, "Long live the King !"

Friday, the 9th.

It is impossible, *mon Prince*, for me to give you a true idea of the scene in the House of Commons yesterday. Read the debates if you have the patience. You will find first a solemn protestation on the part of the Queen, and a long and fairly satisfactory explanation from Lord Castlereagh of all the counts of indictment, but you will notice obvious aversion on his part from the whole affair. You will also find a superb speech by Brougham, which moved the whole assembly, and an appeal to the feelings of the House which had its effect, since eventually there was a forty-eight hours' adjournment to consider or to reach some means of settlement between the King and the Queen—an impossibility ; but the vote does honour to the representatives of the nation. Lastly, a Minister, Mr. Canning, advanced his former relations with the Queen and the affection he still has for her, to excuse himself from participation in any measure whatsoever against her—declaring that he would rather hand in his resignation than consent. The debate was of the greatest interest. The

¹ John Hely-Hutchinson (Lord Donoughmore) had conveyed an offer of £50,000 p.a., provided the Queen remained abroad.



Queen Catherine from a sketch by Sir George Scharf

June 1820]

THE QUEEN IN LONDON

Queen gave no assistance : her position is unchanged. This evening an important decision will be taken by the Commons ; for the great trial is to begin, and God knows where it will end.

It is said that the Queen is detaching herself from Wood, in order to place herself entirely in the hands of her counsel. The Ministers are overwhelmed with business and worry ; the Opposition anxious about the general harm which may result, but pleased at the particular benefit which they may secure ; the mob noisy, amusing themselves by smashing windows—ours were broken last night ; and the King calm and satisfied. It is a deplorable business, and I am sure that you will think the same.

June 10.

I went out yesterday evening, and was very much surprised to encounter Lord Castlereagh, who, I thought, would be debating all the rest of the night in the House of Commons. The Queen has taken a step which may lead to some compromise ; one hopes so, and it seems the more probable since she has withdrawn from the domination of Wood. She left his house in the night and went to take up her quarters at a wretched little lodging near Portman Square. Last night was calm ; we had a great many soldiers in our street.

The 11th.

The evening at Lady Castlereagh's was very agitated. The Ministers had just had an unexpected Cabinet meeting, which produced much chatter and comment. Sleep overcame my curiosity, and I could not wait for the end of the meeting. We live here in continual tumult and anxiety. There is something happening every hour. This tension

wears one out mentally and physically ; I believe that the Queen will age us all.

Troops have been brought up round London, and, at night, cavalry pickets occupy the principal quarters of the town. We have some near us ; so that I sleep in peace.

Tuesday, June 13.

Once more the Ministers have adjourned the debate. Here is yet another victory for the Queen, for the Opposition, for public opinion. I do not know if this adjournment will do anything to help ; and, with the obstinacy on both sides, I doubt it. But what is clear is that the House will not support the Ministers. The latter are temporising in order not to be defeated—and, in my opinion, that is already a tacit avowal of a defeat.

A few ladies of the family of the Duke of Bedford have been to pay their respects to the Queen. That example may be followed. Lady Jersey is very active in making proselytes for the Queen, but very cautious herself. She is glad for others to go and burn their fingers ; but she does not want to burn her own. There's generosity for you.

Thursday, the 15th.

We had the Duke of Wellington to dinner yesterday, and, as there were a good many people, we were able to talk at ease. For a week affairs had prevented him from coming to see me. He spoke to me of all the worries of the moment and said that he would regard it as a great good fortune if you were here at this instant, since you would be able to give advice on the whole question. I expatiated a little on the Cabinet's quarrel with the King, and told him how disastrous would be the effect of their resignation. He replied : "Do you suppose that any other consideration holds us back ?

We should have thrown up the whole thing twenty times over if Castlereagh and I had not represented to our colleagues what the general consequences would be if we resigned. We shall be firm ; we must hold out." I was delighted to hear this. But will they succeed ?

There was a reception at Court this morning. I made my curtsy, Prince, as ambassadress to the new King ; he is radiant with joy. Not so his Ministers ; they were holding a Cabinet meeting in the midst of the royal reception. There is talk of commissioners being nominated on either side. That is to say, there will be a regular negotiation. Meanwhile, the Duke of York is actively employed in belittling the King to his Ministers . . .

June 21.

The other day the Duke of York was almost torn to pieces by the enthusiasm of the mob. About 6000 people had collected near his house, and when he came out they pressed round him shouting : "We like princes who show themselves ; we don't like Grand Turks who shut themselves up in their scraglio—long live the Duke of York—our King to be." They were very much frightened by this at Carlton House, and the object of these acclamations was more frightened still. The mob escorted him as far as the chapel where he was going.

The 22nd.

I spent the day yesterday with the Duke of Wellington and cleared up several details about the affair of the Queen which have always struck me as very extraordinary. Why, for instance, were they not able to prevent her arrival ? Because, since July of last year, the Government has put itself blindly into the hands of Brougham. He made himself

responsible for preventing her coming, and for bringing about the divorce, provided that he was allowed complete independence of action, and he absolutely insisted that no-one but himself should be entrusted with any mission to the Queen. Wellington claims that he was the only minister who opposed this excess of confidence; all his colleagues wanted to trust Brougham, and he had to give in. Finally, Brougham brought them to the present pass; and Wellington added: "It is the only mistake we have made, but it was a big mistake." There is another one, equally serious, of which I have heard from Lady Conyngham. At the time of the quarrel between the Cabinet and the King, during February, they compromised with him as follows. They promised to bring before Parliament an Act of Annulment against the Queen if she set foot in England. They imagined that they were quite safe with this condition, persuaded as they were that Brougham's influence would avert the scandal; and the King, more cunning than his Ministers, contented himself with their promise, because he was convinced that Brougham was merely amusing himself at the expense of the Cabinet. You must admit it is rather foolish.

Sunday, June 25.

I am melting in the heat. Without any warning, we have been transported to the tropics. Only in Kensington Gardens can one breathe. But for some years that lovely garden has been annexed as a middle-class rendezvous, and good society no longer goes there, except to drown itself. Last year they took from its lake the body of a very beautiful woman, expensively dressed, who had probably been a whole week in the water.

The affair of the Queen may take us a long way—I mean, as regards time; Parliament will sit at least another two

months. An entire summer missed—and all for the mistress of Mr. Bergami.¹ Talking of him, a rumour is being spread that he is a woman, and that the Queen will produce proofs. You have no idea of the ridiculous stories that are put about—and of the facility with which people tend to believe any story that exonerates the Queen.

Friday, June 30.

The affair of the Queen has been shelved for a few days ; the terrible “green bag” has been opened. After the secret commission has made its report to the House of Lords, presumably the latter will decide that there are grounds for an enquiry and a divorce. For the purposes of the enquiry, they will have to allow the Queen sufficient time to collect witnesses ; and, from what Lord Castlereagh gave me to understand yesterday, Parliament may then be prorogued for a few months. I am delighted at the prospect.

The Ministers seem to be firm for the moment ; but, in a week, they will be in a flutter again, as they have already been three or four times during the course of this affair. Party hatred has grown very violent. Yesterday, Lord Jersey would not bow to me because the Duke of Wellington was sitting at my side. The King gave Lord Grey a good reception at the Levée. I have just heard this very minute that there will be an adjournment until July 13.

July 1.

Since the end of your congress, *mon Prince*, you have again become an excellent correspondent. Your letters give me great pleasure. From the description you send, I like your countryside very much—I am pleased by your forests and your rocks ; the English landscape is too tidy ; and

¹ Bartolommeo Bergami, the Queen's courier ; said to be her lover.

that I find tedious. Your letters themselves make extremely pleasant reading ; for you have an inexhaustible fund of gaiety—you are the most “*good-humoured*” man I have ever met ; and I am fond of laughing. By the way, your Paul amuses me a great deal. He has just the sort of silliness that is very effective, and an exuberance of spirits that is quite infectious : that is his manner of being witty. In addition, I don’t deny him intelligence, for he has good judgement ; but what he does lack is will-power ; and, rich as he is, it seems a pity that he cannot employ somebody to tell him what he wants, or to make him want something. It is the absence of this faculty that hampers him and gives him such an air of vagueness. The same drawback extends to his opinions. He continually hesitates to form any ; and, when he meets people who express their opinions, he never fails to exclaim : “ That is precisely what *I* think ! ” I can’t bear that others should think exactly as I do—it makes life so dull.

July 4.

Do not be deceived by the appearance of calm here. The Queen is doing more mischief than ever ; and there is one fact not yet generally known, which, however, I believe to be true—that the army is disaffected and is taking up the cause of the Queen. If she has the people on her side, and possibly the army too, what is left ?

July 8.

The day before yesterday I attended the debate at the House of Lords. I was allowed to go as a special favour ; I behaved so modestly that I am hoping to deserve it another time. It was a remarkable sitting ; the Queen’s Counsel spoke. I had made enquiries from the Ministry and from the Opposition, to ensure that nothing would be said at the

session which would make my presence improper—actually, it went off very gravely

The debate was an impressive spectacle. Counsel were summoned to the bar with all the usual ritual ; all the peers of the realm were present. As regards its object, it was perhaps the most remarkable that has taken place for centuries—a Queen indicted by the highest tribunal of the Kingdom. As regards detail—a lawyer (Brougham) sprung from the lowest ranks of society, inveighing against the Cabinet, against the secret Committee against the whole House ; and that House, that Committee, those Ministers allowing themselves to be ridiculed by a little attorney. The Opposition laughed : provided that its adversaries are humiliated, all is well. The Ministers were silent ; firstly, because in that House none of them can speak except Liverpool, and he has not the energy, secondly, because their supporters are good at wearing ribbons, but not at upholding their patrons

Lord Grey has the noblest, the most admirable delivery possible. I do not know if you have heard him speak in the House of Lords. If not, you cannot boast of knowing either Lord Grey or a great orator. Brougham has an astonishing facility ; he did not correct himself once during a two-hours' speech, and a speech which could not be prepared, for it was only when they summoned him to appear that the House let him know the points on which he was allowed to argue. I was much engrossed by the scene before me ; not a word that was said escaped my attention.

Lord Grey's attitude is magnificent ; his voice has the resonance of bronze ; his gestures are always noble, it is impossible not to respect him when he speaks. In the matter of the Queen, he reveals himself as highly impartial. He declares that he is the defender of the rights of the throne. Apparently, it is the throne which runs the greatest risk in

this unfortunate affair. Heavens, how it has sunk in public opinion ! When the House had risen, I met Brougham at the Duke of Devonshire's ; who was much diverted by all the impertinent observations he had been allowed to make.

Wellington said to me : "What shame on us to let ourselves be treated so by that fellow. Never, in all my life, have I spent two more unpleasant hours." If Wellington could speak, or if his colleagues were not cowards !

The Coronation has been postponed by the Ministers. Postponed—that's the point to which they have degraded their office—gaining time, postponing difficulties : they never get beyond that. In addition, the postponement results, I believe, from a fact of which I have already informed you—that they are not sure of the army. The Duke of York, who tells me a great deal, has not told me this ; but he boasts of sometimes spending three nights running at his office. He is not making plans of campaign. What is he doing ?

The 10th.

We go back to town this evening ; and I shall go straight to one or two routs to find out what the peers have decided. There is great curiosity about the session this evening, since it is to decide the date of the Queen's trial. In the Ministers' place, I should want it at once ; but that is no reason for their wanting it. The Radical families are already urging the populace to take up arms in defence of the Queen ; and she herself, in her answer to the Westminster deputation, makes an appeal to the people. On such occasions, delay is the worst policy ; they should strike quickly and decisively ; that would daunt the mob.

Yesterday, Wellington wrote to tell me of the arrival of Mrs. Paterson, the American, and to ask me to introduce

her to the pleasures of London. The style of his letter radiates happiness. I know Mrs. Paterson only by sight, and certainly that is the best way to know her; she is superb. Wellington does not bother himself much about the rest.

July 11.

Wellington told me yesterday that Lady Conyngham had said to him: "I know your colleagues say that I am stupid; I will show them that I am not a fool." Wellington added: "She has the deuce of a lot of courage to dare to say such a thing to me." To that, I can answer that she has, and that she will do as she wishes. I told you this as soon as she was taken into favour, and I repeat it now with even more conviction . . . I see very well what plans she is making, and how she is making them.

The position in England is indeed extraordinary. I know a great deal more than the interested parties, for I am treated so much as an Englishwoman by both sides that nobody minds talking in front of me. The English, silent and cold about everything else, are particularly talkative and frank about their own affairs. They have not got the knack of ordinary conversation, and do not take the trouble to talk to you, if you want to talk of trivial things; but boldly propose the most intimate questions, and they are on their own ground. Above all, argue (you must not think of being wholly of their opinion) and they appreciate you much more than you could have hoped at the beginning of the conversation.

In this unmusical country, there are horrible barrel-organs which go about the streets—at the moment, there is one beneath my window which is playing so out of tune that I feel almost inclined to cry, and find it nearly impossible to write to you. I have not a single correct idea in my head

while I am listening to discordant sounds. It causes me a physical discomfort, which immediately extends to my mental faculties. Adieu, *mon Prince*, let me know particularly that you have received this number. I shall be anxious, for I have taken very little trouble in writing it. You will find a great deal of chatter ; but you are accustomed to my faults, as you are to my qualities. . . .

July 16.

M. Decazes¹ has arrived. We are returning to town tonight, for as colleagues we must pay him our respects. His affair in Buenos Ayres is an unfortunate omen for his arrival ; people are furious with him ; in spite of which, I am prepared to bet that he will be courted and fêted. I know the English well enough to have discovered that any new arrival, with a certain reputation and a certain polish, is sure to begin by winning their hearts. To last, you have to have merit ; but, at the beginning, it is immaterial. The Englishman is the most inquisitive creature in the world and the most given to staring. When Madame de Staël came here, I saw Lady Jersey and Lady Hertford get up on chairs to applaud her. A similar honour has been accorded to me, too ; but that was because they thought a Russian partook somewhat of the bear.

Yesterday, Lord Castlereagh showed me the changes he has had made in his country house. It has been much enlarged ; but what taste in furnishing ! The story of Don Quixote carpets his study, and Sancho is being tossed in a blanket just in front of his desk. He says that gives him a pleasant sensation, and he thinks its position is excellent. Join me in laughing !

¹ The Duc Decazes, French Ambassador.

je lui demandais après il
faisoit l'gard d'un remplacement
"bon, disons, fais votre faccung
à a nous, je me suis fécie" avec
mon d'odie, celui, un par un bon
mon Tronçera

j'ai cette intuition conviction -
à les meurs les plus brillantes, 'mille
mille d'ambles principes. il est ambitieux
à l'Esprit,
le ministre qui il voudrait l'écrire
partir. pour il faut qu'il y
fasse votre adhésion. De l'ancien
un ancien le ministre seait complètement
d'ambles; peut être même transigerait-il
ambles d'Esprit - depuis il ne paraît pas
possible d'ambles la moindre contrainte
dans un honneur. il seait d'Esprit

July 1820]

SPAIN AND ITALY

The 20th.

Another revolution, *mon Prince*,¹ and a revolution which will have an immediate effect upon your movements. Here, they are dumbfounded by the news. You will not be ; you will act. When talking of Spain, I told you that constitutions were making the round of Europe, and you made fun of me. I cannot see, however, that I was particularly extravagant. I remember having read . . . the quotation of a passage of one of your cabinet despatches, which said : the year 20 will witness many unexpected events. You were a prophet. What catastrophes, what events have come to pass in these six or seven months !

My Emperor is full of qualities, of fine and good intentions, of rectitude. Nevertheless, if one investigates the source of all the troubles which are at present convulsing the world, does one not come back to him ? Is it not his liberalism that has strengthened the democratic party in Europe ? This is a painful admission. But must he not make it himself at the bottom of his heart ? That he has recovered, I firmly believe ; but the seed he has sown is still sprouting.

July 21.

The Duke of Wellington was sitting beside me yesterday evening. He seemed to be almost asleep. Suddenly, he woke up and observed : "Devil take me, Prince Metternich must march. He must advance all his troops against Naples. It will be five or six weeks before they are in a position to act. Meanwhile, he will warn his allies of what he is going to do. They will give their consent. He must crush this Italian revolution ; but he must come out of it with clean hands, do you understand. He can play a splendid part." Those were his words ; I have not changed a syllable. It is

¹ In Naples.

possible that Wellington may have neither the opportunity, nor the right, to convey his opinion to you, so I think it may not be pointless to pass it on.

London, July 22.

I came here yesterday to entertain our new French colleague at dinner. As the Duke of York was curious to see the eyes which turned the head of Louis XVIII, he came to dinner too, and was the cause of an extremely comic scene. We had the dwarf Ambassador¹ with us. How could one suppose that he did not know the Duke of York? He has been in his company at four of the King's levées. He came in, pounced on me, jostled the Duke, then said to him, "Sir, don't let me disturb you. Please sit down." "Take care," I said to him, "it is the Duke of York." He listened politely—he is deaf—and redoubled his entreaties that this stout gentleman should not remain standing on his account. The poor Duke, who is the most facetious of men, stuffed his hat into his mouth, but ended with a great guffaw, which infected me and the rest of a very serious company. Poor Frias persisted in his mistake so long that it was a real torture disabusing him of it. It was not till he sat down to dinner that he began to suspect the Duke's identity. His confusion was quite painful to observe.

I am anxious about the fate of my last letter. Please let me know for certain if no. 114 has reached you without signs of having been broken open, if it was tied up and sealed, if it was in a black wrapper which, in its turn, ought to have had a great many seals? I must know all this to set my mind at rest.

There is to be a truce to the affair of the Queen till August 17. On that day, the peers of the three realms have to be in Parlia-

¹ Frias, the Liberal Spanish ambassador.

ment at ten o'clock in the morning, under pain of imprisonment in the Tower, or of a fine of 500 guineas a day. Only septuagenarians are excused, and they will be the most punctual so as not to give away their age. What a trial we shall witness ! Those grave spiritual lords, how will they take the pretty things they are going to hear ? The other day, I asked Lord Harrowby what would come of it, if, in the end, the Queen were acquitted. "The King would go to reign in Hanover," was his reply. Well, *mon Prince*, I am not sure that she will be found guilty. By the House of Lords, yes. But the Commons ? What a miserable business !

Good night, at last, it is midnight—the hour of ghosts. In a quarter of an hour the noise will begin at the shutter of one of the windows of my bedroom. It never fails. I always open my eyes wide to see if there is anything there ; I see nothing and go to sleep. You know, this noise is a strange affair. They have talked of owls and bats ; they have looked everywhere ; nothing to be found—and, as I am not frightened, I have given up the search. I told you, did I not, that the owners of this house, Mr. and Mrs. Bonard, were found murdered in their bed, in this very room, and the bed at that time was placed in front of this very window, which was then blocked up ? It is queer, all the same ; not the deaths, I mean, but the noise.

The English newspapers are odious. The Opposition ones are all democratic ; those of the other party, all stupid. Here they are already discussing whether or no the English army will one day follow the example of the Spanish and Neapolitan armies. That is a nice subject for newspapers supposed to be ministerial. The Duke of York holds a great many reviews ; the King has not yet shown himself on these occasions ; he is making a mistake.

The 27th.

The troops are disaffected. They are being paid by the Queen's partisans ; that much is certain. The Duke of York told me so himself. Last month, she distributed £9000 amongst the soldiers of the guard. All this is very bad, and we shall only get out of it by blood-letting. As it is not my business to be brave, I am feeling thoroughly frightened ; and, if anything happens, I shall run away.

The 30th.

Wellington talks about nothing but Naples ; it engrosses him and he always comes back to his : "They must march" ; I fancy he would very much like to be of the party. Here it would absorb all the interest, self-esteem and attention of the country. No more distress, because industry would be set moving ; no more Radicals, because there would be no more distress ; no more disaffection in the army, because the army would be abroad ; and no more Queen, because no-one would take any further notice of her. Really, if I were an English Minister, I should declare war.

Monday, the 31st.

I have never spent a more frightful night than the last. I was roused from my first sleep by all the windows in my bedroom being broken. I jumped out of bed and ran to my child's room ; and found the maid and the nurse praying on their knees. I did not know what was happening ; the sky was on fire, the thunder rolling without a pause, and nobody knew where to stand to avoid flying glass ; for every window was smashed. My husband had run to my side ; the whole household was up in a second, to help if the lightning should strike anywhere. It was a real inferno ;

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the worst of the experience lasted an hour and a half and I was in such misery that I never remembered for a moment that I was not dressed. In the end, I began to feel cold and fortunately the storm ceased ; and, except that this morning the house and the garden look as if they had been through a siege, we have suffered no harm.

August 2.

Yesterday, we were at a fête that Lord Castlereagh gave at his country place. We tried to be very gay. He himself insisted on waltzing with me—heavens, what hard work to keep the Minister in revolution ! I am a very suitable person to make that kind of sacrifice, not as regards physical resources, but as regards goodwill. While we were dancing, those members of the party who had some sentimental preoccupation went for a stroll. It was a dark night ; the little paths were well screened with thick laurel bushes ; and the great majority of the guests gave us the slip. There were some comic scenes. In the end, the ball-room was occupied only by little girls, dancers of the calibre of my husband and the master of the house, a few old women and myself. Englishwomen always astonish me, in spite of my long experience of the country. I should like to take their indiscretion for the height of naïveté ; but, after all, they have husbands, and I confess myself baffled.

Camden Place, the 6th.

The poor Duchess of York has just died ; I am deeply distressed ; I was very intimate with her and found much pleasure in her company. During the last six months I scarcely saw her ; she was in a dying condition nearly all the time. She had a great deal of wit and was malicious to people she did not like, but a most faithful and indulgent friend to the few persons who made up her circle. Her

manner of life was peculiar, and consequently subject to a thousand interpretations. She died alone, except for her servants. She had nobody near her, and would never allow one of her ladies even to live in the same place as herself. Latterly, I again offered the Duke of York to go to her and spend a few days there, because I knew that I was the only person whom she would have cared to see and to be tended by. He told me that she would scarcely recognise me and that she never saw him for a quarter of an hour a week without having an attack of nerves. She died of dropsy of the chest.

August 10.

I have learned of the death of your daughter—believe me, *mon Prince*, that I enter sincerely into your affliction. I understand it and feel it as if I myself were enduring the same pain. I cannot refrain from rejoicing on your behalf that the Neapolitan revolution, since it had to take place, overwhelms you exactly at this moment; for I cannot help thinking that much of the energy that you have already expended on this business is due to your unhappy frame of mind. To a man such as you, great sorrow must give great strength. And, in your actual position, the sentiment of what Europe expects from you will bring all your faculties into play and, in this manner, perhaps, distract you from your troubles. . . . You have, *mon Prince*, a great and difficult task to perform; I cannot doubt of your success. I encountered here many unfavourable and wavering opinions at the moment when the revolution in Naples was first reported. Your Ambassador, who never has any opinion, said: "We shall see; it is difficult to judge; Prince Metternich must act with caution," and expressed other equally positive sentiments. I have always said: He will act—And he will act energetically and promptly, I thought of saying, as your Ambassador

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FEAR OF A REVOLUTION

should have done on his own account. Wellington and I alone were right on this occasion.

Adieu, *mon Prince*, I suffer in your grief, as I shall rejoice in your glory.

The 12th.

In a few days there will be a serious crisis in this country. The Queen's trial begins next week. Any day may bring trouble. The Opposition believes there will be a revolution ; the Ministry perhaps fears it. The whole progress of the affair is so peculiar that it is difficult to judge of anything beforehand, and for the moment I find it prudent to wait and not commit myself to an opinion. There is one thing of which my experience of this country makes me certain : it is that trouble which is much heralded never comes off. All the same, the lessons of experience may be at fault in circumstances so extraordinary as these.

The Queen has changed her lodging once more. She will settle tomorrow in the house adjacent to Lord Castlereagh's, and will have to pass Carlton House every day to go to Parliament. Here is a pretty piece of spite. Castlereagh told me that it would not disturb him in the least, except that the mob might begin to pull down his house. Few men have Lord Castlereagh's intrepid coolness, and more than once nothing but his unruffled appearance has overawed the mob. One ought always to show courage, even if it is only through fright ; it is the one infallible resource.

Tomorrow, at ten o'clock, all the sages of the three realms will be assembled ; there will be a roll-call in the House of Lords. What a task they are undertaking, and who can tell how it will end ! There are fears of serious trouble. However, I do not feel very frightened ; but I am determined not to give myself time to be ; for, at the first threatening sign, I am off. I left Berlin eight years ago at the moment

when Marshal Oudinot's artillery was entering ; I shall not wait for the Radicals to lay siege to Camden Place.¹

Today saw the funeral of the Duchess of York. The Duke wrote me a very touching letter on the death of his wife ; and I wanted to go and see him, but my husband would not let me. That grieved me, because if I have one virtue, it is compassion for the sorrows of another ; and, in this respect, the poor Duke will not get much help from his family. When he goes out again, he will bring me the farewell letter his wife sent him, in which, he tells me, I am mentioned. All the letters she wrote a short time before her death were in her usual cheerful style.

Thursday, the 17th.

I have passed two days doing nothing ; and, when I come to think of it, the Reader to Madame Mère² was responsible. I am furious. M. Decazes came to spend a few days with us accompanied by his ladies. These Frenchmen cannot live in the country. They want to be amused the whole day ; they never take up a book. You have to talk, or play, or run about with them. That is a fine way of spending one's life. M. Decazes has only a moderate amount of wit, and what he has is all directed to minor intrigue ; he has bad taste and a great deal of self-importance and vanity. He kisses his little wife all day long—she is certainly the ugliest woman living. She is 18 and looks 40 ; and there is nothing with which to compare the size of her nose and her mouth. Someone said it was surprising that such a large mouth had not yet swallowed such a large nose. Madame P...teau³

¹ Rented by the Lievens. It was named by Camden ; in 1765 Lord Chancellor Pratt took it as the title for his Peerage, it was sold by his son and was the residence of Napoleon III, who died there in 1873.

² le duc Decazes.

³ Madame de Princetau ; Decaze's sister ; Louis XVIII's reputed mistress.



In the House of Lords during the trial of Queen Caroline, August 1820.

A sketch drawn in the House of Lords during the trial of Queen Caroline, August 1820, by Sir Charles Hayter

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THE QUEEN'S TRIAL BEGINS

gave us a fright three times yesterday. She had an attack of nerves, a fainting fit and another attack of nerves—all in public. We cut her stay-laces ; she has beautiful shoulders ; and, in fact, it is very becoming to her to be taken ill—but three times is too much. During the night, she made a frightful to-do because she was afraid of ghosts. At last, thank heaven, the family has left.

I am going to town this morning ; it is the great day, and my road takes me by the Houses of Parliament. They want me to go a roundabout way, and I have said that I will. My husband goes ahead on horseback ; and, as I shall be alone, I shall direct my coachman. I am not afraid of any harm that may come to me, and I am rather curious.

The 19th.

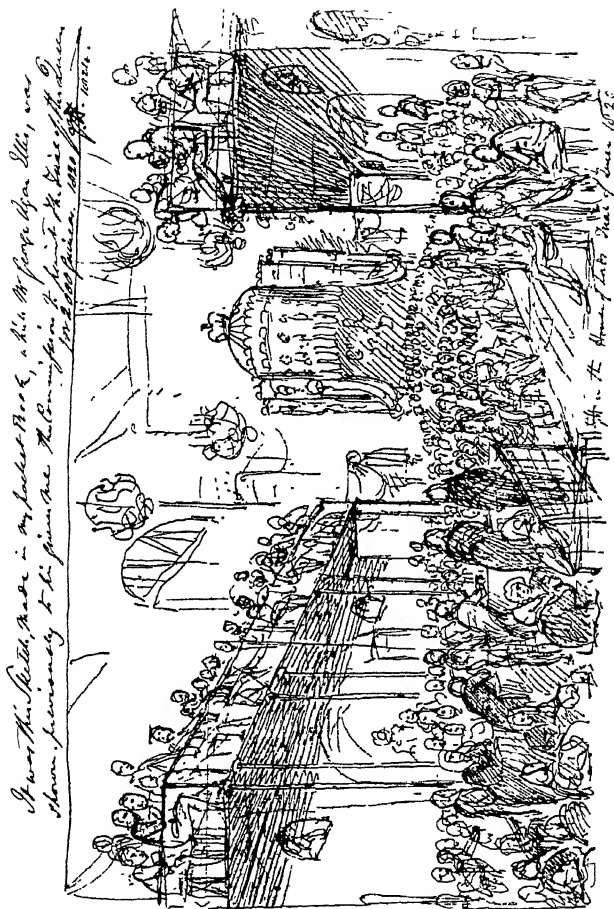
I kept my word—I went by Parliament the other day. The crowd was terrific. I was stopped, and they wanted me to shout “Long live the Queen,” and my servants to take off their hats. I was in an open carriage. My heart beat quickly for a moment ; but I put a bold face on it and I did not shout. I had forbidden my servants to take off their hats. The Russian cockade, which has three colours, gave me a certain constitutional look, which was a good thing in the circumstances. A smart touch of the whip set the horses bounding, and I got out of it. Esterhazy was standing cautiously at a window ; he saw me pass and said that he was afraid for me. I reached home without accident and my husband scolded me ; but I was able to prove to him by my experience that they were not killing people. All the same, five men were killed by the soldiers the day before yesterday in front of the Houses of Parliament. The newspapers say nothing of this ; for the Jacobin papers do not want the occurrence, should it become known, to discourage the mob from going to the House, and the Ministerial

papers themselves are not anxious to boast about it. The Duke of York told me about it yesterday ; he had got it from the military reports. The Duke is the idol of the mob ; they are all for the Queen and for him. He frowns and does not bow, because they cheer him by the title of king. Wellington is terribly booed—and I believe he feels it. It is a shocking ordeal, coming out of the Houses of Parliament every day ; the House rises at half-past four, and twenty or thirty thousand Radicals are waiting for you, greeting the peers with hisses or cheers, as it suits them. There are a great many soldiers and constables. This first stage of the trial may last three or four weeks, and every day the same spectacle. Your friend Wellington did something in very bad taste. He was the only person who kept his hat on, during the whole of the first hearing, in the Queen's presence. Lord Castlereagh has left his house ; he was told that, however courageous it might be to brave the danger, his presence became criminal when it provoked a disturbance. So he has had his bed installed in the Foreign Office, in the room where he gives audience to ambassadors. To be reduced to that !

We shall go to town regularly twice a week during all this period. One must see and hear for oneself. As is reasonable, there are no social gatherings ; but, as I am intimate with many households, I break through the impenetrable English barriers. The other day I amused myself by visiting first a Ministerial family, then an Opposition one, and then coming home. Lady Jersey is absolutely in a raging fever. How all this would amuse you ; for, however regrettable the whole affair may be, and however tragically it may yet turn out, it still has its comic side !

The 23rd.

Have you heard of the dramatic moment—the Queen's "Oh Theodore" ? It made a very bad impression. She



A Sketch of the Queen's Trial, drawn in the House of Lords
by Sir Charles Hayter

explains it as a start of indignation, at the sight of a witness on whose gratitude she thought that she could count. But nobody is deceived about the cause of the start. She was thunderstruck at seeing him ; and this at the very beginning of the proceedings was not very encouraging for her supporters. Lord Liverpool immediately sent a messenger to inform the King, treating "Oh Theodore" as a fact of the greatest importance. I fancy that the Queen's party is diminishing a little among the people ; perhaps the rain has cooled their ardour—it's an excellent sedative, and there has been enough, in all conscience, the last few days to have an effect.

Lady Jersey has become so violent that she is at daggers drawn even with the Holland family. She inveighs bitterly against the moderate tone adopted by Lord Grey and Lord Holland. Poor woman, she is quite frenzied—she ought to go out and cool herself off in the rain. I send you a family tree which is making everyone laugh. It is scandalous but very witty. Show it to somebody. There is not a single word in it without its point, and not a line of the drawings that cannot be recognised.

What horrors in the newspapers ! I read the speech for the prosecution ; I have not had the heart to read the evidence ; it is too disgusting. Is the Queen really a woman ? And how can the House of Lords, uniting as it does all that is most dignified and most exalted in the greatest nation in the world, lower itself by listening to such vile trash ? Was there no other way of treating her as she deserves ? Worst of all, how could statesmen have allowed things to come to such a pass ? One of the Queen's lawyers put the trial in a nutshell when he called it a solemn farce.

The 27th.

You can see from the newspapers how the Queen's affair is progressing, if you have the time and the patience to read

them. Nowadays I get my husband to read them to me ; he reads aloud what he can—and what he does read gives me a fair idea of what he misses out. And that woman can sit there, listening to all these things being said and proved against her, and when she emerges after one of these scandalous hearings she is greeted with respect and enthusiasm, not by the mob—make no mistake about that—but by the solid middle classes who have won England her reputation for virtue and morality. You have to see for yourself what the Queen's escort is like to get an accurate notion of the cheering and the people who cheer. The streets are full of well-dressed men and respectable women, all waving their hats and their handkerchiefs. You see the real mob, too—the kind of blackguards whom the French newspapers translate quite seriously as “black guards”—but they are certainly not in the majority. All this shows only too clearly how unpopular the King is and what people think of his behaviour, and how convinced they are that any woman who was protected and proclaimed guiltless by the venerable George III is bound to be the victim of calumny and vile persecution under George IV. You have to take this into account in trying to understand the inexplicable things that are taking place.

Brougham is quibbling for all he is worth, and whenever he gets the chance (they give him plenty of rope) he skirmishes with the Solicitor-General, the Chancellor and the House as a whole. Yesterday he succeeded in having the hearing adjourned, thus wasting five hours which are precious in such an affair and with the country in such a state of excitement and suspense. The Italian witnesses are supplying not only the Press but even Society with all its jokes. Everyone is using the catchword “Non mi ricordo.”



*A Sketch of a Scene, including Henry Brougham, during the Queen's Trial
by Sir Charles Hayter*

By kind permission of the British Museum

The 29th.

I have come back from London not at all edified by what I learned there. Things are going badly ; the House of Lords deliberates and cannot agree, Brougham makes fun of both the House and the Ministers, the crowd swells and every day increases the Queen's popularity and the unwillingness of the public to believe in the evidence of the Italian witnesses. And every day adds to the difficulties of the Government. The Ministers spend half the day in the House of Lords and the other half at Cabinet meetings ; and, in spite of that, I am sure that they are the last men in the world who can foresee how it will end. Every day the Duke of Wellington is handled more and more roughly by the mob ; yesterday he was nearly pulled off his horse. Evidently, they are getting bolder.

The 31st.

You will have seen that, the day before yesterday, the Government was divided on a question raised by Brougham. Liverpool supported the Queen's counsel—the whole Opposition voted on his side, and part of the Government as well. The Chancellor and Lord Sidmouth were in the minority against their colleagues. Although this looks like a difference of opinion amongst the members of the Government, I do not think it should be regarded as anything but a demonstration, possibly *staged* beforehand, of the impartiality which the Ministers are ready to show in this matter. The only two who were opposed to giving Brougham so much freedom in the cross-examination of witnesses were the ostensible guardians of the strict letter of the law. They voted for its maintenance : the others for departure from it in extraordinary circumstances. Be that as it may, it is a triumph for Brougham, and I fancy there are others coming ; there is

no doubt about it, that man has his wits about him and knows all the tricks of his trade.

September 2.

Do you know, *mon Prince*, what the Queen does in Parliament? You will never guess. She plays—at backgammon. Since she announced at the start that she would be at the House of Lords every day in order to confound the witnesses by her presence, she does not like to go back on her word. So she goes; sometimes she goes in to the hearing, sometimes not; generally, she stays in the next room and plays with Alderman Wood.

It is believed that the Queen's counsel will ask for three months' delay to bring witnesses in her favour, and that the House of Lords will adjourn at the end of next week.

The 6th.

I was in town yesterday and spent the evening at Lady Jersey's; I found nobody there but Lord Grey, Mr. Tierney and Brougham. My husband will never go there with me; he feels he ought not to be seen in this nest of sedition. He is right—it is different for a woman. I have not spent such an amusing evening for a long time. The shades of feeling in the party are remarkable. Lord Grey is indignant and ashamed; he cannot bear even to hear the Queen's name mentioned. Tierney won't open his mouth. Brougham laughs and argues. I heard him say, of some fantastic action ascribed to the Queen: "I can believe in any folly on the part of that woman. We know quite well she is capable of it." I asked Tierney why he did not speak. "Because," he said, "I don't believe in either side; I have my own opinion, but for the time being I am keeping it to myself." I enquired of Brougham if what is being said is true, that

the Queen is going to call the Marchioness of Conyngham as witness for the defence ; he said yes. That, at least, is a witty piece of malice. It appears that Brougham will ask for the adjournment of the House of Lords until November 24.

Before going to Lady Jersey's, I talked to some members of the other party, and was not at all reassured by their misgivings. The Archbishop of York told me that neither he nor any of the ecclesiastical members of the House would vote for the Bill ; that they could not do so without dishonouring their calling ; and that, on this point, their party was absolutely firm. This will be a very strong argument for the Queen in the eyes of the public. The clergy say that the Act of Degradation might be passed, but not the divorce clause, and that no ecclesiastical court could grant a divorce in the present circumstances of the King and the Queen respectively. You may remember that Lord Liverpool let fall a few words in the House of Lords implying that the divorce clause might be abandoned. These were his words : "This clause is the least important of the two." Brougham was talking about it yesterday evening in a way that struck me as very sensible. By these means the Queen, he said, would be deprived of her rank, and they would be saying to the King : You will keep your wife, but without her rank. The Bill would thus become actually a bill lowering the status of the King. It must pass in its entirety or not at all. Well, I tell you that I am certain it will not be passed. Anyway, the Queen is quite mad, and what surprises me is that they don't question the witnesses about that, or at least ask her doctor. If they pronounced her mad they would avoid all this scandal and be nearer the truth besides. Meanwhile I am expecting the crowning act of madness on her part—that she will throw up the game when she is on the point of winning. She wants to go to Ramsgate ; the packet-boats are just under her window, and nobody would try to stop

her flight, any more than they tried to stop that of James II. In the meantime, the Ministers are wretched ; their position is terrible and grows worse every day. The only person who is cheerful and pleased with himself is the King of Parliament—Brougham.

The 8th.

Well, my archbishop and my premonition were both right. The Bill has been cut in two—or that, at least, is what Lord Liverpool is proposing to the House. What a strange alliance ! Lord Grey is taking the King's side against the Ministers. One false step, and all the rest have followed. Think for a moment of the state of England, the position of the King, the Government, the House of Lords, the Anglican clergy. Think on the other hand of what is brewing in the Commons—think of the Queen, the Radicals, above all of that lawyer, dominating, giving orders and being obeyed ; and then find a solution. I don't think the Ministers will get out of it ; every day they plunge in deeper. It was noticed that the King's counsel began his speech for the prosecution during a terrible storm, and went on with it yesterday during the eclipse. There is a couplet about it :

Accusation in thunder,
And proof in the dark.

September 9.

The Duke of York comes to see me regularly. I don't think he sees things as they really are—perhaps because of the position in which he has voluntarily placed himself. There is no doubt that he would have done better to remain neutral in this affair. He had the chance ; the death of the Duchess was a perfectly legitimate excuse. He thought it was his duty to do otherwise. Perhaps his fear of the King influenced

his decision ; in any case, I think it is a pity. Brougham holds on his dubious course. From the first day of the trial, it has been obvious that he wants to pick a quarrel with the House of Lords so as to provoke them to some act of severity against him which would justify the Queen's counsel in throwing up the case before this court. He never opens his mouth without insulting the peers : he plagues them ; he lies to them ; he is as impertinent as he possibly can be. The Government sees what he is aiming at and will not give him the satisfaction of achieving it. The result is forbearance and a series of concessions on one side, arrogance and a series of demands on the other. The peers have the right to send an insolent counsel to the Tower ; but, in this case, counsel is a member of Parliament and the House of Commons would start a quarrel with the Lords ; and a Parliamentary quarrel would end in dissolution. That means that the Bill would be dropped ; for if there were an election the new House would be radical.

The 11th.

When the Ministers went to see the King at Windsor the other day to lay before him their proposal for abandoning the divorce clause, he listened to them and said : "Do as you please," and showed them the door. They were not even given anything to eat and came back famished. That's friendly and promises well.

The House of Lords has been adjourned till October 3. There was an argument between the Queen, who wanted the trial to go straight on, and Brougham, who asked for two months in order to be absolutely prepared. They compromised, and the Queen's counsel announced in the House of Lords that, at the end of three weeks, he would appear with his defence and his witnesses.

The 16th.

I have had no time to write to you ; for the last few days we have had half the diplomatic corps on our hands, among them the Liberal ambassador, the Duc de Frias. What a man ! I was much against his spending the night with us, for he upsets all the other guests. We made a plot to get him to leave ; at dinner, someone mentioned the murder which was committed in this house, and he was so horror-stricken on hearing of it that we chose this as a means of getting rid of him. After dinner, he asked me in which room the murder had taken place. I dropped my eyes and looked embarrassed. "I thought so," he said, "it's mine ; I knew it from the pink curtains ; that proves it." He rushed off at once, rang all the bells in the house and called his servants—his groom, his valet and his footman ; for he had brought them all with him. We were delighted ; clearly, he was going to order his horses. A few minutes later, he came down again, very pale, and told me in a trembling voice that he had been consulting his servants about what he ought to do, and that they had all advised him to barricade his door during the night. "A fine idea," he went on, "locking myself in with a pair of ghosts ! Better to sleep with the doors open so that they can get out." "A nice house this is," he said, going on with his monologue, "shutting oneself up in a forest as dark as a cellar !" Suddenly he looked up and saw in front of him a large gilt frame, with a brown silk curtain instead of a portrait. "What's that ?" he said with a start. "The ghost is behind there," said I. "Oh, what a dreadful house !" he cried, holding his head in his hands. All the others went off into peals of laughter. He was too terrified to be offended. I tried to distract him ; we went into the billiard-room—he found that the lights shone quite differently from anything he had ever seen, that the fire burnt blue instead of red ; goodness knows what

he didn't find. At last, the terrible moment of going to bed arrived. I had to pass his room—I found it all lit up with the doors wide open and three beds instead of one. He had ordered two of his servants to sleep in his room, and the third outside his door. He spent the whole night like this. Next morning, we found out that he had wanted to leave but had been too frightened to go through the forest (what he took for a forest is a charming avenue of laurels). These Spanish grandees are a strange crew. Really one might charge money for exhibiting this one. I could never get tired of listening to him.

Do you like reading English, *mon Prince*, and have you ever had time to read the novels, or a novel, of Walter Scott? French books are not worth reading after him—there is such truth in the characters and the situations. I think I have found out the chief quality of Walter Scott's novels; his principal characters are never idealised as in all other novels. On the contrary, it is they who have the most weaknesses, so that in them weak people can see themselves. And, as there are more weak people than strong, there results a delightful impression of truth and fidelity of portraiture which makes the reader identify himself with his MacIvors and his Roland Grahams. Love, usually the essence of the novel, always takes second place; the dominant interest of all his works is something greater. With him, one finds oneself far readier to enter low company than with any other novelist (especially foreign novelists). English rustic society is the most picturesque and quaint of all, and I like his tavern talk as well as his palace conversation. When you have finished your "Carbonari" novel, and given it a happy ending, promise to read *Ivanhoe* or *The Abbot*—that is Scott's last book.

Brighton, the 27th.

We found the Duke of York here, the Bathursts and the little Marchioness of Worcester, who is so sweet, so pretty and so negligible that Lady Granville says that, if you were to dissect her, you would find nothing inside but a sweet little machine. There is nobody else here. The King is sailing at Portsmouth and is not coming. I bathe, although it is very cold—but that makes the sea seem warm. The Duke of York showers attentions on me. He has just ruined my whole morning. He came to visit me three times; the third time I did not invite him to sit down; he does not like standing up, so that curtailed his visit. I went with him again to see the work going on at the Kremlin. We were shown a chandelier which cost eleven thousand pounds sterling—I write it out in full because it is really incredible. The chandelier is in the form of a tulip held by a dragon. I send you a bad, but faithful, engraving of the King's palace here. How can one describe such a piece of architecture? The style is a mixture of Moorish, Tartar, Gothic and Chinese, and all in stone and iron. It is a whim which has already cost £700,000; and it still is not fit to live in.

Brougham will decide about the trial on Tuesday. I am expecting something unexpected from him (that sounds like an Irish Bull). I do not believe that the defence will be either begun or carried on according to the rules. It seems to me so difficult for him to defend himself. You will have some important news from England shortly. Whichever way the trial goes, the Ministers will be the victims more or less immediately. The very least this affair can do is considerably to damage their reputation. I told you this the day after the Queen arrived, and I tell you again now. I remember I dined that day with your ambassador; he was much amused over the uproar the mob was making and the buffoonery we were going to see. I told him that I looked at it seriously,

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“THE QUEEN FOR EVER”

and he made fun of me. It is an odd habit always to laugh at anything a woman says. All the same, it is a consolation to think that it is nearly always second-rate people who act on this principle. They mistake contempt for a rejoinder ; they think they make themselves more important by despising others—really, I am often glad to know that people find me stupid. From some of them, it is a certificate to the contrary.

London, October 3.

Yesterday, the Queen received eleven more addresses, accompanied in each case by a deputation of several thousand people carrying banners with the most subversive inscriptions. With all one hears and reads, it is difficult to believe that there are still a King and a Government in this country. Just now, as I was passing by our stables, I read, written in large letters on the wall : “The Queen for ever, the King in the river.” All the walls in town are scrawled over with nice things of this kind. I can’t tell you what horrible faces one sees nowadays in the streets and the main roads, and how insolently they come up and bawl in one’s ears, “The Queen for ever.” As I was coming back to town yesterday, I was afraid that two of these awful creatures were going to jump into my carriage, to force me to bawl with them.

I hear from the favourite that Canning must be in Vienna. He is a man with plenty of wit, but, to my mind, wit like Rossini’s, designed to impress. But I don’t know him at all well ; he does not go into society. He is very domestic, his wife is ugly and jealous, and he never lives in London ; so that it is difficult to see him. Sarcasm is the method he is best at, but he hardly ever lets himself go in front of strangers. At bottom, he is a timid character, and that timidity is the result of his political position. Mr. Canning is not thought well of ; he made a compromise with his principles, and that is never forgiven in England.

October 7.

M. Decazes is celebrating as best as he can the birth of the little Duc de Bordeaux. He is doing it bit by bit. Neither his town quarters nor the amount of society at present in London are really adequate for a proper party; so he gives one nearly every day—to the Harrow boys, to the French surgeons and doctors, and, the day after tomorrow, to a hotch-potch of diplomats, Ministers and high society. He is inviting a sample of each kind, myself among them. This means that I have to go ten miles in full dress for my dinner, see the illuminations, and come back in the evening by the road most popular with highway robbers. Last week, they robbed an Attaché from the French Embassy after threatening to blow out his brains.

The 10th.

I am quite exhausted after yesterday's outing. M. Decazes gave his party in the country. The Ministers were unexpectedly summoned to a Cabinet meeting on the Queen's trial, so that none of them was able to be there. The peerage made the excuse that the session in the House had been too tiring for them to be able to go gallivanting off to the country. As a result of all these excuses, there was nobody at his party but a small section of the diplomatic corps—for lack of space he had asked only the most distinguished. He had gone to great expense—his park beautifully illuminated, fireworks as good as they ever are in England, where nobody knows anything about them, marvellous flowers, and all for about a dozen people. I was sorry for him; I should have liked to make myself into five to swell the company; but, as there is hardly enough of me to make one, it would not do for me to divide it up. It was a pathetic affair, the more so because I had to hold out to the bitter end. I came back to town very late and very tired.

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A NEW FIRE EXTINGUISHER

October 12.

How boring London will be when there is no more Queen to be tried ! It is curious how either party is thrown into extremes of joy or depression according to the way the evidence goes against her or in her favour. For the last two days, her stock has been very low. An unfortunate English lieutenant, bent on serving her, by ill luck made an indiscreet remark which had no reference to her ; and from this followed a string of contradictions which so played on the poor man's nerves that he fainted in the House. The impression against her was unmistakable ; perhaps the fate of the trial rested with the lieutenant.

October 16.

The Queen's counsel is now hoping to carry the war into the enemy's camp ; and, instead of trying her, they are hoping to try the Commission of Milan. If Brougham succeeds in bringing it off, it will be a smart move. The general opinion is that the Bill will not pass even the House of Lords.

Not long ago, the Duke of Wellington took me to see Woolwich Arsenal, of which he is head. It has grown enormously during the eight years since I was there last. I was shown 30,000 cannons. What interested me most was a new invention for putting out fires. On pressing a spring you can flood a building in an instant by means of wheels which throw out water in every direction, producing an appearance like that of fireworks. You probably will not understand a word of my explanation about fireworks which put out real fires ; but picture to yourself temples, palm-trees and whatever else you see in the Prater on Sundays, made of water instead of fire, and you have Congreve's new invention.

The 18th.

Brougham has got where he wanted ; he has set his foot on the first rung and he will get to the top of the ladder. Starting as the most subordinate agent of the Commission of Milan, he will catch up with all those who composed it. From that position nobody can dislodge him ; and so it will go on—I don't see where it can end, except at the throne. Every day the Queen's trial takes on some new aspect. It is no use making guesses.

The 25th.

The defence for the Queen is closed. Brougham's behaviour is extraordinary. After having done everything he could to get Browne¹ brought to trial, he flew into a violent temper when the King's counsel asked for a few days' delay to give him time to appear. As usual, they did what Brougham wanted—it has been the invariable practice throughout the trial. Now it has reached its last stage in the House of Lords. Judgement will probably be pronounced during the course of next week.

During the whole trial, Brougham has made demands only in order to be refused and to have the right to complain. No sooner was he granted anything than he no longer wanted it ; and, in the case of Browne, it is clear that he had no serious charge to bring against him and that consequently he preferred to let the matter drop.

As I was coming back from the country yesterday, I ran into the processions which were going to present addresses to the Queen. When they caught sight of my aristocratic equipage, they surrounded me and wanted me to shout, "Long live the Queen !" I was reading the newspapers in the carriage, and I did not look up. The crowd got bored

¹ Colonel Browne ; agent of Milan Commission ; said to have bribed Caroline's servants.

“Proposal to Murder the Queen”
From a contemporary broad-sheet
in the British Museum

PROPOSAL

TO

MURDER THE QUEEN!

Englishmen! you have always been famed for Justice, Humanity, and for tenderness towards Women; read the following Paragraph, taken from the **MORNING POST** of Monday, 26th June, 1820.

‘ England ought not to be involved in misery from an **ALIEN** and
‘ **UNWORTHY OBJECT**; we mean for a cause not essential to our
‘ **National Interest**, and not of sufficient importance to call for a do-
‘ mestic division upon it, to the ruin of our happiness and repose; and,
‘ as *the Queen alone stands in the way* of arrangement, we say she
‘ ought to yield to the Universal Good, *we care not* whether as a
‘ **MARTYR** or a **CRIMINAL**!

Englishmen, look at this daring proposal, to make your queen a MARTYR! Martyrs, you know, have sometimes been *burnt*; sometimes *buried alive*; sometimes *boiled*; sometimes *stabbed*; sometimes *beheaded*; and this wretch, in the face of the English Nation, proposes to make the Queen a MARTYR! He cares not, you see, whether her Majesty be *innocent* or not! He recommends *putting her out of the way*, whether Innocent or Guilty! What is this but a direct instigation to *Murder the Queen*? Words cannot convey a plainer instigation? Is there no *Punishment* for this instigation? Is it no crime to call upon the People to make a MARTYR of the Lawful Real Queen of the Country? Who are the EMPLOYERS of this vile wretch?---Englishmen, you must guess who the Employers are, and you will know what ought to befall those DETESTABLE EMPLOYERS.---It is HIGH TREASON, by the Law of England, to endeavour to cause the *Death* of the *Queen Consort*; and yet this wretch is at large, as if he had committed no crime at all!---Englishmen, look well at these things.---Will you stand by, while such monsters dip their hands in the blood of a WOMAN; an INNOCENT WOMAN; an INNOCENT and INJURED QUEEN?

N. B. *Eighty Thousand Pounds* granted for *Secret Services* last Year, and *Sixty Thousand* this Year!!!

Oct. 1820]

“VIRTUE TRIUMPHS”

and left me alone. What an extraordinary sight ! I was exactly opposite the King's palace. There were probably 30,000 people in the street, and the processions were made up of some thousands of men on foot and in carriages, the pedestrians marching gravely two by two, carrying inscribed banners : “Virtue triumphs,” “Down with the conspirators,” “Non mi ricordo ;” and shouting “Hurrah !” Next came the guild of workers in crystal. Two hundred masters and apprentices were each carrying in procession on the end of a fork some specimen of their handiwork—a crown, a sceptre, vases, urns, everything you can think of which might come from that type of shop, all of the very finest workmanship. In the distance, the effect produced was that of walking diamonds ; the sun glittered on it ; it was really beautiful. Next came the bakers displaying samples of their trade. Yesterday, the Queen received thirty addresses ; meanwhile, she is on trial, and the King is in hiding. I forgot to mention the Quakers, accompanied by their wives and daughters—the most moral people in England.

Society is much interested in the visit paid yesterday by Prince Leopold to the Queen. She sent him away without seeing him, and quite right too. He ought to have made this gesture on the day of her arrival in England, or not at all. Now it is pure cowardice. No doubt he is afraid of the mob. If he had gone at once, he would perhaps have been wrong as regards his relation with the King ; but it would have been to show courage and act on principle ; for, after all, the Queen is the mother of his wife. To go now is to make a false step after reflection—a tactical error, as well as a silly thing to do.

I laughed over your passion at the age of 9 for a woman of 34 ; now you can laugh in your turn over one I imagined I had at the age of 11. I had already been asked in marriage by a young man, very handsome and intelligent. Since

he was an extremely suitable husband, as regards both birth and fortune, my mother, who was still alive at the time and who was fond of him, encouraged his suit ; and naturally I felt obliged to be in love with him, and indeed was sufficiently so to fall ill. At the death of my mother, the Empress, who had other plans for me, insisted that I should be separated from the young man, and on the pretext of a quarrel Count Elmpt had had with the young Grand Duke Constantine—in which, by the way, he had struck a blow—she got the Emperor Paul to forbid him to appear in the capital. This is a very dull story that I am telling you. But, to go on, I was clapped into a convent in St. Petersburg and cried so much at being separated from Count Elmpt, and was so ill with wretchedness, that my governess, who was the best and the weakest of women, consented to send my letters to him secretly and to give me his. So there I was engaged in writing love letters at the age of 11. I loved him with all my heart ; I thought of nothing else ; but I was buried in a convent where I was to remain for three years, and there was no hope of seeing my passion before that time was up. After a few months, the Empress one day came suddenly into my room, took possession of all the boxes and drawers and found in my governess's a letter from Count Elmpt addressed to me. Then and there, my governess was taken off and deposited across the frontier by two police dragoons. In that heroic era of Russian history, the love-affairs of little girls were treated with military strictness. I was handed over to another governess, a very severe one. I was deprived of all means of communication ; I went on crying ; but, as nobody took any notice of me, at last I recovered. But I must tell you the end of the persecution. The Empress wanted to marry me to Count Arakchéieff, at that time the Emperor Paul's favourite, whose protecting influence she had strong motives for wishing to enlist on her own behalf. He was

the same person who today is the Emperor Alexander's father confessor ; you must know what sort of a man he is. My God, what a husband ! I escaped because, a little later, the Emperor Paul quarrelled with his wife, and the favourite no longer wanted to have anything to do with the Empress's little protégée. I have written four pages round a childish story—all the same, I must give an end to my romance. The young man died almost at the same time as I was married. I knew that he had written to me, but I never got his letter ; I have reason to suppose that my husband suppressed it.

The 31st.

The peers are collecting their thoughts for the great discussion which begins on Thursday ; and, among other methods of arriving at the requisite frame of mind, a large party of them have just gone gadding off to Newmarket. I cannot resist telling you an English pun, interesting because Brougham, the Queen's defender and champion, is the author : "The Queen is pure innocence (in no sense)." It bears striking witness to the moral opinion people have of her ; legal opinion is another matter ; and party opinion another again.

People are beginning to call on the Queen. Lady Jersey wants to go too. Meanwhile, Lady Fitzwilliam has cleared the way by going first. She is a great lady of the most impeccable reputation. I do not know her because her health prevents her from going into society, so I asked Lady Granville what kind of a woman she was. "Oh," said she, "*Elle a passé sa vie à faire des révérences et des vertus.*" I told my friend that one of her greatest charms was not being able to speak French. To my mind, there is nothing quainter and more amusing than the English brand of French. If it weren't for plagiarism, which I disdain, I should want to "make virtues" too.

Today, the English have a grand opportunity to gratify their passion for betting. The odds are that the Bill will not pass. It will be decided in a few days ; the first debate, fixed for the day after tomorrow, will give one an idea of what is going to happen to the Bill. I am as anxious about it as any Englishwoman. They say that the Queen is in a pitiful state of nerves. Really, I am soft-hearted enough to feel sorry for the woman. There was some disappointment that Lady Conyngham was not summoned to appear at the bar, as had been promised, and as Brougham himself had told me she would. It appears that Lord Grey persuaded him to give up the idea. It is easy to guess the reasons of that move.

November 3.

I am closing this without having any news to add. I don't know what will happen at the debate today. Yesterday's was to have been distinguished by the presence of the Queen and her delivery of a speech she had composed herself. Her lawyers prevented her from coming. Her plan was, and still is, to give her own account of the relations between the King and herself, to reveal everything she knows about his behaviour, and not to confine herself to that alone but to give a little historical narrative of the behaviour of each member of the Royal Family, not forgetting the offspring of the unmarried princesses. She is quite capable of telling the whole story.

Lord Erskine had a stroke in the middle of his speech. Today, they are expecting a division on the second reading of the Bill. The Archbishop of York is still determined to vote against it. It is thought that the Ministers will get a majority today ; but it is not so certain that they will obtain a majority for the adoption of the Bill. In fact, nobody has any news, and everyone's longing for it. Meanwhile, Lady Jersey is wearing the Queen's portrait round her neck !

Nov. 1820]

THE QUEEN AND POLITICS

Camden Place, November 4.

Our friend's husband became some little time ago violently Opposition—on the question of the Queen, I mean. He is suspected, I fancy not without some cause, of having had the same relations with her as Mr. Canning. The old attachment has been revived, and he is zealous in her cause. Consequently, he has fallen out with his sister Lady Harrowby. The whole business has become such a party question that there are no ties of family or friendship which still hold good. I think that I survive in the midst of it all, because I do what Lord Stewart has to do in Vienna. I listen—it is not compromising, nor very clever, nor very difficult.

The 6th.

I am going to town to hear about this idiotic affair. Today the Bill has its second reading, or if it hasn't, that means it is rejected—one hardly knows which to pray for. It needs talent to have brought things to such a pass that you can only jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. I don't remember if I told you what Brougham said to me one day. He was asking me what people on the Continent thought of events in England. I replied: "Don't tell me you don't know." "Quite true," he said, "they are laughing at me." "Exactly."

The 7th.

You cannot imagine how triumphant the Opposition are over yesterday's division in the House of Lords—a minority of 95, among them all the greatest, richest and most respectable members. Many people attached for thirty years to Mr. Pitt's Ministry and sworn enemies of the Whigs; others whose positions and fortunes are dependent on the goodwill of the Government; an archbishop—all these make up an

imposing and alarming body for the Ministry to have to face. Lord Grey is delighted. I spent the evening with him ; he gave me his word that he had intended to vote for the Bill and said that, if I had taken the trouble to watch him at the beginning of the trial, I should have seen what horror the very name of the Queen inspired in him, so convinced was he that the terms of the Bill would be found justified by the enquiry. "This enquiry," he said, "can convince no-one of the crime imputed to the Queen. We are sworn on our honour to judge that woman according to the evidence ; we have to put aside our prejudices and any private opinions we may have. It is our duty to give judgement according to whatever conviction we may have arrived at from the evidence. There is no choice ; nothing has been proved. Read the names of the minority and you will see what all honest and independent people think. A majority of 28 on a matter of State is tantamount to a defeat." This is the general opinion ; and goodness knows what the Ministers are going to do. Among the deserters is Lord Castlereagh's brother-in-law, Lord Suffield. One can feel certain of nothing.

The 8th.

The Government and the Opposition have started a battle of wits that is interesting to watch. The first want to stay in power, the second to get into power—that is the explanation of their fantastic behaviour. They are no more concerned with the Queen now than with me. The Opposition voted against the second reading of the Bill because, by doing so, they hoped to throw out the Government. The latter, on the other hand, saw that their honour as well as their political existence depended on getting the second reading passed as a justification of their action. Once that was achieved, they no longer cared whether the Bill passed ; and,



The RADICAL LADDER.

London Pub'd by G. Humphreys 27 S. James's St. April 15 1824

"The Radical Ladder," by Cruikshank

indeed, they did not want it to pass with the divorce clause, which they knew was distasteful to the people. Without that clause, the Bill might pass in the Commons; with it, never. So the Ministers are now siding against the divorce; at once, the Opposition insist on the divorce with the two-fold aim of imperilling the Bill in the Commons and of pleasing the King. The King finds himself deserted by his Ministers and supported by the Whigs in his dearest wish—the divorce. Yesterday, the majority in favour of that clause was made up of the enemies of the Government: isn't it extraordinary? Morality and the peace of the country go for nothing; thirst for power is the only thing that counts; I am a little disgusted by the spectacle and no longer find it amusing.

Talking of this, I attracted the attention of the mob yesterday. I was driving to Bond Street when I met the Queen in a State coach with six horses, being led at a walking pace, and escorted as usual by some hundreds of scallywags. As soon as they saw my carriage, they stopped it and ordered my servants to take off their hats, and me to let the window down. Neither I nor my servants obeyed. I was surrounded by people shouting abuse, whistling and booing. Meanwhile, the Queen passed by, throwing me a withering glance. I saw two enormous black eyebrows, as big as two of my fingers put together: the contents of two pots of rouge on her cheeks: and a veil over everything. She looks completely brazen. I broke up her escort, for half of them followed me with the same friendly demonstrations and did not leave me till I reached Lady Granville's door. They are decent people all the same; they carried off the honours in noise—that was all—and I held the honours in inflexibility.

You will hear by this post the decision about the fate of the Queen. Tomorrow, there will be a third reading; it looks like passing by a small majority. My letter will be

handed over before the House adjourns. I could not find out anything from the Duke of York of what the King thinks of his nine Ministers voting against the divorce ; he is extremely reticent on this subject. It was nicely done on his part, to vote for the divorce in his capacity as heir apparent to the Crown.

The 11th, 9 o'clock.

I must begin my letter with the great topic of conversation in England, which has been occupying me ever since yesterday. The Bill against the Queen has been withdrawn. That is a great piece of good news. It may prevent incalculable harm. But who knows what evils and dangers the measure may yet bring in its train ? Why, if you are going to finish by admitting yourself mistaken, allow such an affair to drag on so long ? Was it worth the five months of disturbance we have just lived through ? The throne has been degraded—what a mistake ! Now come all the difficulties over details : what is to be done, what decision is to be taken about the woman ? Everything still remains to be decided. However, there is general enthusiasm ; all parties congratulate themselves on no longer being faced with the prospect of a revolution. That is the chief, the dominating feeling up to now. The Opposition have high hopes. The Ministers have been compromised in public opinion without satisfying their master—it is a position which offers natural opportunities to their opponents.

Do you know that the Queen had a protest ready in case she should have been convicted ? It began like this : “Carolina Regina in spite of you all.” It was not read ; for Lord Liverpool withdrew the Bill as soon as the result of the division was announced. The Queen was waiting in the next room. When they came to tell her the news she burst into tears and

cried : "I am lost." That convinces me that she is a woman of intelligence. What will you say and think of all this ? The way the whole affair has been mismanaged ! What does the King say now ? I can think of a thousand questions and not a single answer. What I understand least of all is how the Ministers can remain after what has happened. I could not bring myself to send word to the Duke of Wellington ; I don't know what to say to him, for I can imagine how upset he will be. Only two days ago, he said to me again and again : "We must go on, we must persevere to the finish." England will feel the ill effects of this mis-carriage for a long time. . . .

I must stop and try to talk of something else. We are going soon to the country, to stay with the Duc Decazes—we promised long ago ; and now we must keep to it. The weather is marvellous. While we are away our windows will certainly be broken. The whole city is illuminated ; yesterday indeed the illuminations were already pretty general ; and they never stop cheering in the streets. I am not a great talker, but I wish I could talk to you now, particularly because I seldom meet people with whom I like talking. Nobody talks about this business—for I don't call it talking to rave. Here everyone spends the time declaiming against personalities or party factions—it drives me to despair. If I were the Government I should shelve the whole thing for a few months ; they can if they like. In the interval, passions would have time to calm down ; the Queen would get tired of it all and might go away. But I am slipping back to the same subject and no doubt boring you. You have not the spectacle of the Queen and of the mob under your eyes, and you cannot share the excitement that I feel. Good-bye : if you could extricate the Ministers from the position they are in now, you would be doing a great service.

Monday evening, the 13th.

At the moment I am writing to you, there is a terrific burst of firing in the street. That is the English way of rejoicing. They fire off cannons and muskets. . . . The whole city is illuminated, but we have held out, as well as our windows ; I can see that the mob is pleased at the victory of the Queen only because it gives an excuse for all this tomfoolery. She will soon be forgotten. I am not so sure that the Opposition will forget its advantage as quickly. Many supporters of the Government will desert it. They cannot forgive the Cabinet for having led them into voting for the Bill and then left them in the lurch. I know three peers whom they will not get back on their side. The King is said to be resigned ; I can't believe it.

London, the 14th.

The mob is going on in the same way ; the city is still illuminated. The people are mad with enthusiasm for the Queen, and, here and there, have indulged in looting and all kinds of brutality. I told my servants that they could take off their hats as much as they liked ; when it is a question of being shot, I submit to the law of force ; and, as I have no military escort, the mob is my master. They will never get it out of their heads now that it was they who triumphed over Parliament and the Ministers : and it is true up to a point. Cowardice influenced a large number of votes ; and, in the end, it was that formidable minority which produced the result we have seen.

London, November 18.

I think I told you the other day of the odious threat which the Opposition are trying to put about, to induce the

King to change his Government, i.e. that if he keeps his Ministers the Queen stays ; if he takes others, she will leave England. I got this, very much diluted and with many explanations, straight from Lord Grey. Wellington tells me that it is perfectly true and that the Opposition had even given the King to understand this very clearly. In his opinion, it was the greatest service they could do the Ministers, because the King's pride would revolt against a threat ; and, what is more, the proposal shows that the Opposition has an understanding with the Queen which must estrange the King more than ever from the Whigs. I don't know to what extent this reasoning is justified, and whether the hope of seeing the Queen go would not overrule all other feelings. What is certain is that the Opposition will hold on to the Queen as a threat, as a means of creating difficulties and, perhaps, of winning in the long run. I had a long talk with Lord Harrowby about all that has happened. You will have heard of the strange part he played at the end of the trial. He had come to dislike the Bill more than any of the Radicals ; and it is known that, if Lord Liverpool had not risen to withdraw it, after the third count he would have publicly demanded its withdrawal. He expresses himself extremely freely about the King. He cannot conceive how he can possibly carry on in the face of such hatred and contempt, voiced by great and small, friends and enemies. Discontent is growing, now that they have refused to give the Queen a palace. The first joy has been dissipated in rockets and smoke. Now argument and invective are again to the fore. You cannot imagine what horrors the newspapers print.

The 23rd.

Wellington complains bitterly of the difficult mood the King is in. He quarrels with his Ministers about everything,

and on the slightest excuse. He was dead against the prorogation of Parliament. They got their way by plain force. They are in a nice mess. In any case, that sudden prorogation, without a word said, has made a great impression, and a very bad one. You will see from the papers what a fuss they created in the House of Commons. All this is bad policy. If I were a Minister, I should clear out of the party this very minute, and leave the dirty work to be done by those who wanted my job. They would get rid of the Queen somehow or other ; and, when that was done, I should return to my post ; for my opponents would not have enough support to hold it. All this could be easily done, even now. In two months, it will be too late, and they will be worse off. The Queen no longer is the tool of the Radicals, but of the Opposition.

November 30.

Yesterday, I saw the Queen going in procession to St. Paul's. There was a crowd of at least 50,000 people. It was beautiful, absurd, frightening, all at once. Not a single soldier, and perfect order, enthusiasm and good humour. On the first banner in the procession was written : "The Queen's Guard—the People." You could see nothing but laurels and white ribbons. They cheered twice as loud when the Queen's coach passed in front of the King's palace. No doubt, he was there, hidden in some corner. She was in an open carriage. It will be a strange memory for me, that procession. I don't know what is going to happen here ; it is more of a muddle than ever. Mr. Canning is at daggers drawn with all his colleagues. He says they are fools ; the King says so too ; but the colleagues do not budge. They are trying to arrive at a settlement with the third party ; but this will not come to anything. Lord Grenville is too old



PANORAMIC VIEW HER MAJESTY QUEEN CAROLINE GOING IN STATE
to Saint Paul's Cathedral &c. &c. 1820

THE ROYAL RUSH LIGHT —



Queen Caroline going in state to St. Paul's, Nov. 20th, 1820

"The Royal Rush Light," by Cruikshank

to want to take office. Wellington told me that the object of his audience with the King the other day was to consult him on the new plan of attack against the Queen. I forget now if I told you about this plan. It is nothing less than to prove to Parliament that the Queen once shut her own daughter, Princess Charlotte, in her closet with a certain Captain Hesse, with whom she was in love. It is quite true that the Princess spoke to me about this, but she told me so many extravagant and incredible things of the kind that I used not to pay the slightest attention to her stories. The King wants it to be known that his daughter had a lover before she was married, and he wants to prove it by means of a written statement in the possession of the Duchess of Gloucester. Have you ever heard of such a revolting scheme? The Ministers seem determined not to give in to this new whim of their master. I believe that one could count on a regular revolution if they ever thought of fresh proceedings. But the King is obstinate, and our friend Münster is obstinate too. The good man, with the best intentions in the world, has already done a great deal of harm. He has always encouraged, flattered and upheld the King's passion, and without him there would have been no Commission of Milan, no trial, and none of the nice things we see happening now.

December 5.

Would you like to know how many daily news-sheets were printed in London during the two months of the trial? 32,000 a day. Would you like to know how many letters there are in a single page of the *Times*? 250,000. I am very learned; I got that from the engineer Brunel, inventor of the *Times* presses, who is in touch with the editors of all the papers. I had him to dine yesterday; he gave me a lecture on engineering which rather bored me, and of which I

remember scarcely anything. All the same, he is the cleverest man at his job.

The 22nd.

Mr. Canning's resignation from the Ministry is ostensibly regretted by his colleagues ; personally, I cannot help thinking that they are very glad. Considering the terms they were on, it must have been much more inconvenient to keep him than to lose him. Wellington told me that quite recently he had been deputed to urge him to stay and that he had had a very strange conversation with him in this context. The immediate cause of the split is the question of the Prayer-Book. The Ministers will not consent to have the Queen's name put back into the prayers, and he wanted it to be ; here is the reason. He told the Duke of Wellington that he was with the Princess of Wales when, after the first year of their marriage, she received the famous letter from the Prince of Wales giving her her freedom and taking back his. She consulted Canning as to how she was to take this document. He decided peremptorily that it was a letter giving her permission to do as she liked, and they took advantage of it on the spot. I rather fancy that might have happened even before the letter. However that may be, he regards himself as the first to incite the Queen to the course of action she has since followed ; and, making it a question of conscience, he declared that he could not pronounce her unworthy to occupy the throne on grounds for which he considered himself responsible ; and a split with his colleagues has resulted. He will be out of England by January 1.

Tuesday, the 26th.

Yesterday, I thought I was going to be in a fix. The Duke of York and Prince Leopold have fallen out since the Queen's



*From a contemporary
print in the British
Museum*

trial. The latter let me know that he was going to call on me in the morning (he wants me to receive him ceremoniously, and regularly, just because he has these pretensions, I keep him waiting in the drawing-room); meantime, the Duke of York arrived to see me. I told him that the other was coming, and gave orders to my servants to warn him at the door so that he could choose between coming in or going away again. The Duke of York, who is the best fellow in the world and hates being on bad terms with anyone, would have liked nothing better than to make it up in my presence; but, on the other hand, he is so shy and so embarrassed that his nerves were all on edge with waiting. In the end, the other did not appear; and I found out that, when he saw the Duke coming to my house, he gave up the idea of calling. I shall probably find out something from him tomorrow about his relations with the Queen; I am curious to hear what he has to say.

Mr. Peel has refused Canning's post. He wanted something more. Lord Castlereagh was not willing to give him the leadership of the House of Commons, and in the end he got on to his high horse. To tell the truth, the auspices are not brilliant for entering the Ministry. In his place, I fancy I should have said, No, as he did. Mr. Peel is an able man; he has wit; and his head is screwed on the right way. His political principles incline to wisdom and moderation; and I have no doubt that he will make his mark one of these days.

Wherstead, Saturday, the 6th.

The men have been out hunting all morning; and I have been spending it in my room or in Lady Granville's. We dine at eight o'clock, and the rest of the evening is divided between music and gambling. Yesterday, I held a hand of cards for the third time in my life. I settled down to a game

of piquet with the Duke of Wellington. He knows as little about it as I do ; and the only difference between us is that I play badly and know it, and he plays badly and thinks he plays well. It is incredible how his pride has a share in everything that he does. It plunges him into despair not to be able to do something, or to do it badly. It is a strange vanity. Men have a great deal of it, a hundred times more than we have. Talking of him and of you, he is not satisfied with what is happening. He says : "Things ought to be hurried up. What is to be done should be done at once : as it is, it will turn out ill." These reflections are caused by news of what happened before the departure of the King of Naples. . . . He said to me again : "None of that family is any good. As long as the Bourbons hold four thrones, there will be no peace in Europe. We have made a tremendous mistake in getting rid of Bonaparte. He is the man we ought to have had. We should not be so badly off with him, as we are without him." The last remark is not new to me ; for the past year, he has returned to this idea at every opportunity.

Sunday, the 7th.

A new paper has just been published called *John Bull*, professing Government principles and attacking the Whigs. The method adopted by the editor is a new and odious one. He attacks individuals, and in the case of visitors to the Queen he gives all the tittle-tattle about the women who called. Yesterday the paper contained a poem entitled "Trip to Vienna," dedicated to Lord Clanwilliam, making remarks about the Duchess of Bedford's journey there. This news-sheet is causing a great stir and has the sale one would predict for stuff of the kind. The presses cannot cope with the dozens of editions of each issue. They have not succeeded

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in identifying the author. In view of the exactitude of the details and of the facts, he must belong to good society. He is doing the Ministers a bad turn. They would come off very poorly if the law of retaliation were applied to them. I will tell Neumann to send you the paper.

London, January 10.

On my arrival in town, I found the Duke of York waiting in my house. Regularly every week, he entertains me with a three hours' *tête-à-tête*. I cannot conceive what special attraction he finds in me. If he is in love, I must confess that I am not aware of it. If he isn't, it certainly is not the pleasure of my conversation which brings him ; for I don't think I manage to get in ten words in the whole three hours. He settles down ; he chatters ; he tells stories ; and, at the end of his visit, he kisses my hands with tears of emotion and gratitude for the pleasure I have given him. I am charmed to give it, as it is so easy.

Strathfield, January 12.

We are here with a crowd of bores, the Castlereaghs, the Esterhazys, the Arbuthnots, some princes I do not know and bad weather into the bargain. My journal will feel the effects of it. It is absolutely essential on a country visit to like the people with whom you are going to spend three times twenty-four hours ; for, short of an affair, which nobody here would risk, you are certain to be bored. However, I do all I can to look as if I were enjoying myself, for I should hate the Duke of Wellington to think I were not ; he goes at it wholeheartedly himself. To kill time I got him to tell me the full story of his military career. He began in India, where he spent seven years. After that, he was in Hanover with the

English army in 1805. Later, he bombarded Copenhagen. He was appointed Secretary for Ireland ; despatched to Portugal, where he was in command of the army ; and then he did what all the world knows and admires. He has never been wounded ; he has never lost a battle. He considers Waterloo the most difficult battle he has fought. His first feat of arms was as follows. He was sent out on an expedition near Calcutta. He mistook the direction, and let a fortress be captured which he ought to have defended. He shut himself up in despair, and what do you think he did ? He fell asleep. I suppose that it was in his sleep that he made up his mind to be a great man. He said to your ambassador, who declared that all would end well in the Neapolitan campaign : "But, my dear Prince, I have always noticed that, in order to end, you have to begin." We all laughed. Indeed, when are you going to do except talk ?

Tomorrow we are going back to town, and, the day after tomorrow, to Woburn again. I had to promise the Duchess of Bedford to go back. She is arranging a little play for my benefit. The visit will take up the greater part of the week ; but, after that I shall not budge, because Parliament will be sitting. The King is going to open it in person ; that, at least, is what his Ministers want. He has not the slightest desire to do it. The drive there and back might be "frisky," as the Spanish Ambassador said. The Kings of England ought, above all things, to have strong nerves, and be able to stand cheering and booing with equal indifference—there is no more cause for the one than for the other. The King is just the opposite. I was in his carriage last summer coming back from the races and going through the crowd, when about twenty scoundrels in the pay of the police began shouting "Hurrah !" His eyes filled with tears. Heavens, I pitied him. He said to me : "You see how nervous I am." I replied : "It is a shame, Sir, for those people are not worth

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THE PRAYER-BOOK

it." The Duke of York is quite different in this respect ; he never cares ; he will know his job very well one day.

Woburn, January 16, 1821.

Lord Castlereagh is expecting his father to die. He looks very wretched at not being allowed to see him ; but they will not let him go. It is too anxious a time here. Everything is ready in the event of the old man's death. It would only mean postponing the debate in the House of Commons for a week. There is an English borough ready to elect Lord Castlereagh, for if he becomes an Irish peer he can no longer be member for an Irish constituency. There is universal uneasiness over the opening of Parliament. After hearing both parties, I have come to the conclusion that the Ministers will have a majority of 50 in the House of Commons on the question of the Prayer-Book—that is to say, for not putting back the Queen's name. If this is so, all difficulties will have been overcome and they will remain in office, but throughout this whole business guesses have generally proved wrong.

The Duke of Wellington was expected today ; but he has just sent word that Cabinet meetings prevent him from leaving London. No doubt, the Ministers must have material to prepare. They are preparing here, too. Each army hopes to take the other by surprise. I believe that the Whigs have too many plans of attack to be successful. To my mind, Lord Castlereagh has one great advantage, the very one which makes other people think he will be defeated—that of being the only Minister in the Commons. He knows just how far he wants to go and how far he can go ; he never lets fall a single indiscreet word, for his opponents to use against him. It was a different matter with Mr. Canning, and I am told that very often he did harm solely through his desire to make

an effect by some brilliant remark. However that may be, if, in a fortnight, the Ministers are not out of office, which is extremely likely, I doubt if anything will dislodge them.

London, January 21.

I came back late yesterday and saw the Duke of Wellington only for a moment. It seems certain, he tells me, that the Ministers will hold their ground. They have forced the King to open Parliament himself, which he did not at all want to do, and, further, they are forcing him to name the Queen in his speech—that terrible word which the Ministers went so far out of their way to avoid. The King will ask Parliament to settle an income on her: that will be the most piquant part of his speech. After that, the Ministers will propose £50,000 a year and will wash their hands of the whole business. It is said that the Queen has bought Prince Leopold's house, which has nothing but a wall to separate it from the gardens of Carlton House. The couple will be able to act the story of Pyramus and Thisbe all over again; it may become quite touching.

Tuesday, the 23rd.

The speed with which London fills up the day before the opening of Parliament is extraordinary. The day before yesterday, there was nobody here; yesterday, there arrived 500 Members of the House of Commons, and over 200 peers with their wives and children; this in a matter of twenty-four hours—with the help of all the horses in England.

The 24th.

The opening of Parliament went off well yesterday. It would certainly be difficult to make a speech less compromis-

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HARDENBROT'S VISIT

ing than the King's. The first session, in fact, was all milk and honey ; as for the rest, we shall see. Talking of seeing, I am writing by candle-light at eleven o'clock in the morning. A little while ago the atmosphere was the colour of burnt topaz, now it is aquamarine. It is enough to make you cry to look out of the window. . . . There is no news here. The Ministers look pleased with their beginning, the Opposition a bit sulky but not down-hearted. The King is quite passive and indifferent to everything that happens. His passion for Lady Conyngham has flared up again. Absence had cooled it for a little ; response by letter was only lukewarm ; now that they are together again, it will be worse than ever.

The 27th.

I was upset yesterday at the death of a man whom I knew very well, for he was attached to the Court of the late Princess Charlotte of Wales—a man called Hardenbrot, remarkable for his enormous nose. It is less than three weeks since he came to call on me. I was alone with him. He told me that he was sometimes seized by fits of madness, during which he was not responsible for his actions. At this alarming information, I went up to the bell-cord and stood sentinel until the Duke of York came in and rescued me from our *tête-à-tête*. Afterwards, I told my husband that I thought Hardenbrot was talking very incoherently. He made enquiries and was told that he was in excellent health and had never shown any sign of madness. Two days later, he went off his head. He was put in the charge of two doctors from Bedlam and died yesterday in a violent fit of madness. Don't ever think of eating lobster after dinner ; that is what the poor lunatic used to do.

Yesterday's session in the House of Commons began at

four o'clock in the afternoon and went on without a break until seven o'clock this morning. The Opposition upheld the Queen's right to be named in the Prayer-Book, and the Government threw out the motion by means of an adjournment in the form of an amendment which was passed by a majority of 310 votes against 209. It is a great thing for the Ministers ; they are proud of themselves, but I don't know if they will be any braver.

Sunday, the 28th.

The Opposition say they are delighted at the outcome of the Prayer-Book question because the people, seeing that they are not represented in Parliament, will give them solid support in the cause of reform. What a ridiculous idea ! And who would suffer more than they, the Whigs, from a revolution, which would be bound to come before the supposed reform ? Presumably, it would console them for being ruined or hanged if the Government were overthrown. The latter, it seems to me, are in a more hopeful way than they were all last year. Of course, they are not out of the wood yet ; but there is a decided improvement. . . . All sensible people are glad ; but the Whigs are in a positive fury. They had already begun to make overtures to the Radicals ; and this will finally result in a coalition. These Whigs have plenty of brains and not a shadow of common sense.

The 30th.

A courier of Paul's is bringing you this. It must go today because he is off to Brighton. He is an odd man ! He always makes a great mystery about his success with the King. It is a system of exaggerated delicacy, which has exactly the same effect as open betrayal : he vanishes like a thief and tells us that he is going north to shoot partridges.

Perhaps the King, as King, is wrong to show favouritism ; but, in any case, I do not see why the favourite should be the one to feel embarrassed.

The King did not look at Prince Leopold at the last levée, and he left the Court in a rage. If I were in the King's place, every time I saw the Prince I should always, up to the last day of my life, ask him for news of the Queen, no more and no less. The King would have the Queen on his side, and the Prince would be humiliated without having any right to complain.

Sunday, February 4.

I did not stir out of the house yesterday. I did not feel well, and when I am like that I can take no pleasure or interest in anything. If I had been in a different frame of mind, I should have got some amusement from an hour's conversation with Prince Leopold, who came to tell me all about his position, about the motives that inspired his step with regard to the Queen, about all that will yet happen to England if they neglect his advice, about his relations with the King—this chapter was the shortest. The King did not look at him, and I believe intends to carry on in that way. Wellington came and interrupted us ; there was a moment's hesitation. Prince Leopold, fearing that the Ministers might turn their backs on him, had taken the initiative and turned his on Lord Castlereagh. Seeing, however, that the Duke of Wellington was greeting him, he cautiously extended the tips of two fingers, which the other seized with his whole hand. I do not know if he found the hand-shake too familiar, or if he was embarrassed by the presence of a third party ; but he left. He did quite right, for he was wearying me with his slow speech and his bad reasoning. Leopold is a Jesuit and a bore.

The Ministers are strengthening their position, for their opponents are very down-hearted. Lord Grey wants to go back to the country ; he says he cannot find a house that suits him in London. His calling on the Queen the other day was done with a very bad grace. In the beginning, he had declared that he would never set foot in her house. Finally, impelled by his friends and his own ill-temper, he consented to go and write his name in the visitors' book. He set off on the expedition with his daughter. No sooner had they got into the hall to write their names than the Queen, who had seen their carriage arrive, sent to beg them to come up. Great discussion and embarrassment in the company. Lady Louisa announced that nothing would make her look the Queen in the face at close quarters, flung herself into the carriage and refused to budge. Lord Grey was for doing the same as his daughter. His son-in-law Lambton (a pure radical aristocrat) pointed out to him the scandal it would cause and the triumph of the Ministerial party, if he offered the Queen such an affront. Finally, Lord Grey went up with rage in his heart and a blush on his cheek ; for there is perhaps no man in England with morals stricter than his. He found the Queen surrounded by her Italian Court and her alderman, and she tried to force him to dine with her. At this, his party spirit failed Lord Grey, and the adventure came to an end with his refusing point-blank and taking to speedy flight. That seems to me a categorical proof of the kind of feeling that the Queen inspires in her defenders.

The 7th.

The King went to Drury Lane yesterday and was received with as much enthusiasm as his father and more—as if he had never instituted proceedings against his wife, as if he were the most virtuous, the most fatherly, the greatest of kings.

What is public opinion worth? I am very glad for his sake and for England's; but it makes me open my eyes.

The Ministers have won something better than the applause of the groundlings. The vote of the Commons establishes them firmly in their place. Lord Castlereagh spoke marvellously, and Brougham's trickery was exposed. He made a bad defence, and his denunciations had no effect. Brougham has deceived all parties, and his own supporters have difficulty in defending him. The Opposition has acted unskillfully and without concerted plan; the Ministers owe their continuance in power to these mistakes far more than to their own deserts. Indeed, they are honest enough to admit it themselves. Everybody is getting tired of the story of the Queen. A few weeks from now probably, no one will remember that such a person exists in England; I believe she will realise this herself and will go away.

Friday, the 9th.

Yesterday, I saw all the Opposition at the Duke of Devonshire's. They look rather at a loss except Lord Grey, whose bearing is always calm and noble. Their battle-cry is no longer the Queen, but Parliamentary reform—a dangerous question to bring forward. They will find out how rash that is when it is too late to draw back.

I must tell you a little story about one of the recent sessions of the House of Commons, which I thought rather amusing. The Government proposed an income of £50,000 for the Queen, and a man called Sumner, a member of the Tory party, suggested reducing it to £30,000—a stupid idea which did not help and annoyed Lord Castlereagh very much. During the debate, he heard that Lord Mount Charles, eldest son of the Marchioness of Conyngham, wanted to vote for the reduction. He went up to him and told him he thought

that in his position it would be imprudent to vote that way. The young Lord began to grow angry and asked Lord Castlereagh haughtily : "What is my position ? If you mean to insult my mother, you will give me satisfaction." Lord Castlereagh replied coldly that he could do what he liked, but that, as he belonged to His Majesty's intimate circle, his vote would look as if it were dictated by the wish of the King, and that he would leave him to consider to what extent that might compromise him. Lord Mount Charles calmed down ; and, as the House did not put the question to the vote, the affair rested at that. The Castlereaghs and the Conynghams have been at open war since the Marchioness first became favourite.

February 10.

Congreve wants to use his rockets for making war on whales. He dined with me yesterday. He explained all sorts of marvellous things to me, but I can remember this alone : he wants the rocket not only to shoot into the whale the harpoon which is to secure it, but also to explode in the wretched creature's belly, so as to prevent its submerging and thus make its capture easy for the whalers. Odious man ! Whales are probably delightful beings.

I think I have sometimes mentioned to you the little Marchioness of Worcester, a pretty, charming, dainty little woman ; she was here yesterday, in great good form and beautifully dressed. When she got up this morning, the sheriff was announced ; he had come to seize everything she had. Her husband had contracted debts for over £100,000. His creditors pressed him ; he had not a halfpenny ; and everything was taken except the clothes his wife stood up in. She fainted ; she wept ; in the evening she went to Covent Garden and laughed a great deal, and then a carriage waited

to take her out of London. The story is a mixture of tragedy and comedy which anyhow inspires profound pity. That little woman is a perfect compound of prudishness and English freedom. She would blush to hear anyone say in the company of men that a woman had just had a baby ; yet the other day she did something quite incredible. We were talking, I don't know why, about Lady Castlereagh's thin legs ; and Princess Esterhazy said that she had never been so astonished as when she saw what sturdy calves I had—a discovery she made staying with me in the country when I was climbing over a hedge. The little Marchioness said at once that she was just the same, and that, although she was very slight and delicate, she had a well-turned leg. Immediately, Princess Esterhazy proposed showing our respective legs, and began by displaying hers—heavens, what solid pillars all the way down ! The little Marchioness was not slow in following her example, clumsily enough to let us see her garter ; it must be admitted that it was a very pretty sight. For my part, I informed the inquisitive that they must wait for the first hedge I had to get over. These Englishwomen are incredible. As for my colleague, it is quite simple ; that is just her way.

February 14.

Crawfurd, the Knight,¹ the one who got himself known in Paris by an extraordinary lawsuit, and a spell in prison as a result of the lawsuit, took it into his head yesterday to try and blow out M. Decazes's brains. He went to his house ; and, as he did not succeed in seeing the ambassador, he set

¹ Neumann, in his *Diary*, gives a somewhat different account of this affair. He relates how Sir James Crawfurd, "known for his eccentricities in Paris," went to an evening party given by Decazes and behaved so badly that he was turned out of the house. Thereupon, he produced a pistol and was hustled off to Bow Street.

on his cousin, also called Decazes. He fired at him ; the priming failed ; but the killer-knight is in prison. There is always some catastrophe in the Decazes household ; he really is the most unlucky ambassador.

The question of the Prayer-Book was brought up again yesterday ; and a majority of 120 decided that the British nation must confine itself to praying for the Queen privately in its heart, but not otherwise. Wilberforce was in the minority, and it was a strong minority. It seems that, ostensibly, they will not be able to return to the subject of the Queen.

February 21.

I have been many days without writing to you ; I left last Saturday for Brighton. The King sent for us rather abruptly ; we have been here three days and I have not had a moment to myself. . . . The King is in great good humour. In this respect, I have found him changed very much for the better. Usually, his society is very restricted—you can give this sentence whatever meaning you like ; but there is much more ease and gaiety than in the past. We had plenty of music and plenty of wit, and we stayed up late enough to make me grow thinner as I sat.

Thursday, the 22nd.

The Queen said to the Duke of Bedford the day before yesterday : “I have second sight, and I tell you that in a few months my name will be heard in all the churches. Nothing is needed but courage and patience, and I have both.”

PART II

Castlereagh

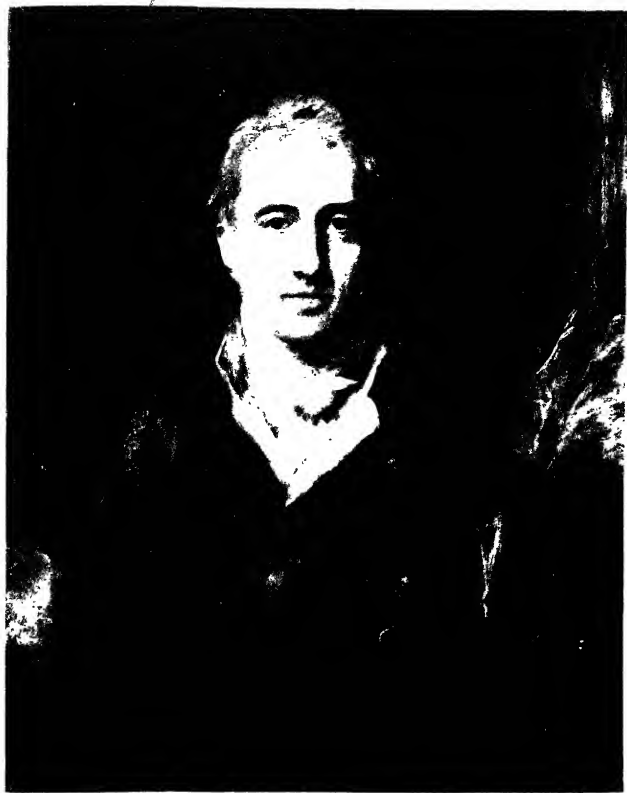
Castlereagh

LIVING as she did from excitement to excitement, Madame de Lieven may very well have regretted the almost daily alarms and excursions that had accompanied the Queen's Trial. She consoled herself by plunging into Cabinet politics (where she identified herself with the interests of the extreme Tories) and by exploring the mysteries of the small and somewhat Oriental clique that had assembled around the King. She was an accomplished flatterer and a patient listener, and knew how to appeal both to the sovereign's vanity and to his sentimental sensuality. She conciliated Lady Conyngham (who, like Lady Hertford, does not appear to have regarded her as a particularly serious rival—the King preferred expansive, motherly women) and used the favourite to advance her personal designs. Thus, it had been decided between herself and Metternich that the King was to be persuaded to make a second journey abroad—for then they would have an opportunity of meeting—and Lady Conyngham became a pawn in their private intrigue. Eventually, these deep-laid plans miscarried. The King announced that, instead of visiting Austria or Italy, he would undertake a triumphal progress to Edinburgh; and Madame de Lieven was obliged to acknowledge that, against royal obstinacy and royal irresponsibility, even the wiles of a female diplomatist were not always effective.

Her portrait of George IV, though incomplete, is remarkably vivid. It seems possible that he had an inherited strain of insanity; and there were moments when Madame de Lieven felt that, in the

atmosphere of Cottage and Pavilion, her own sanity was beginning to give way. Hating his Ministers and fearing the Whigs, the King took refuge in the society of the favourite, the favourite's family and his private physician, Sir William Knighton (nicknamed by Madame de Lieven "the man-midwife"), whom the Russian Ambassadors suspected of having wormed himself into favour by particularly disreputable methods. The atmosphere was one of pseudo-domestic profligacy ; and Madame de Lieven is delighted to be able to record the Duke of Wellington's loudly expressed astonishment when, at her instance, he was invited to Brighton for the first time.

But, if her friendship with George IV was largely cynical, a far warmer and more genuine feeling attached her to Lord Castlereagh. She was fascinated by the reserved, melancholy, high-minded, yet morose and suspicious, statesman ; and, for his part, he returned her feeling with interest. Perhaps he loved her ; certainly, he trusted her. Castlereagh's dark, unhappy, self-tormenting spirit was just then approaching its supreme crisis ; and he found relief in long talks and interminable snail-paced walks with this sympathetic, perceptive, charming woman who was honoured by the devotion of Prince Metternich. Madame de Lieven reported his confidences without scruple. She was able to show the gradual process of estrangement that separated him from his colleagues and to trace the slow breakdown of his reason that culminated in suicide. She received the news of his death with genuine horror ; but it is interesting to learn that she accepted the current rumour (since indignantly denied by the statesman's biographers) that he was the victim of a peculiarly infamous type of blackmail.



Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, by Sir Thomas Lawrence

Feb. 1821]

Dialogue with the King of England

His Majesty : My dear, I'm no ordinary man ; and—as for you—you've more intelligence in your little finger than all my subjects put together. I said "little finger" because I did not want to say "thumb." Now you, my dear, who are so intelligent, you must admit that I am not a fool.

Myself : Indeed, Sir, I wish I could tell you what I think without descending to commonplace flattery. Obviously, your Majesty is a very remarkable man.

His Majesty : That's true. You have no conception of the ideas which sometimes go through my head. I have seen everything in a flash. I'm no mystery-monger ; but I am a philosopher. Nesselrode¹ is an honest fellow ; but Capo d'Istria is a rascal. Lieven knows very well whom the Bourbons owe their throne to. It was all due to a despatch that he wrote on my behalf in 1814. Without that despatch, there would have been a M. le Comte de Lille, but no King of France.

My dear, what have you been saying about those people who were almost in power—whom I almost begged to form a government—and who, then and there, by a series of most unbelievable stupidities, went and slammed the door in their own faces ? My Ministers are imbeciles ; the Opposition—dolts. And here am I in the middle—a pretty position for me to occupy !

I have done extravagant things, and I'm not ashamed of it ; but I've always had my principles, and my principles have always been the same—gallant to every woman, faithful to one. I'm not going to make you a speech ; I have no intention of imitating that mystery-monger (*in the King's vocabulary*,

¹ Count Nesselrode, Russian Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Till the Congress of Verona in 1820, he worked in conjunction with Count Capo d'Istria. His policy generally supported that of Metternich.

this word is equivalent to "mystic") Capo d'Istria. (*Aloud*) Lieven, I've just been saying that Capo d'Istria is a rascal ; but (*sotto voce to me*) one of these days soon I shall be sending the Emperor a certain document—something really memorable—quite unprecedented—a document that will make a tremendous effect. I composed it myself ; but I shall not tell you what it is. No good making those charming eyes at me ; you won't discover ! My dear, if I had a difficult negotiation on hand, I should entrust it to you in preference to anybody else. (*To the Princess Augusta*) Sister, I drink to your health. Long live wine, I say, long live women ! Long live wine, long live men, you will retort. Gentlemen (*addressing the whole company*), the firmest support of my throne, the one man. . . . (*Here the King stops short, joins his hands, lifts his eyes to heaven and moves his lips as if he were reciting a prayer. Then, to Princess Esterhazy*) My dear child, do you know the story of the tailor who was perpetually dropping his wife into the Seine ? Very well, I'm the tailor. You don't understand me, but Madame de Lieven does—I can see that from the corner of her mouth.

Myself : I understand the moral of the story, Sir. (*What story or what moral, I had no idea. But it didn't matter : he had no more idea than I had.*)

His Majesty : That's right—the moral of the story. (*Angrily*) *Damn it, she takes the words out of my mouth !* My dear, as I have already told you, you're more intelligent than anybody else at table. (*Thus, from being more intelligent than all his subjects, I was reduced to being more intelligent than all his guests ; and, as I looked round the table, that seemed to me no difficult matter.*) Gentlemen (*with unction*), the firmest support of my throne, the one man who has taken it upon himself to defend the honour of my crown, the man I shall honour to my dying day, behold him—the Duke of Montrose ! After him, I count on Ireland. I shall go to Ireland. Long live Ireland !

My dear, you should come with me to Dublin, then to Hanover, then to Vienna. At the frontier, I should put on the white uniform ; and, once I had put it on, I should no longer be King. I am a general of the Austrian army : I intend to pay homage to my master. Paul (*to Esterhazy*), you will go ahead to announce me and ask the Emperor to give me only one day of festivities. I shall be merely a general. Then, from Vienna, I shall go to Spa and to Paris ; and we will laugh and enjoy ourselves.

Myself (*turning towards my neighbour, Saint-Aulaire*) :

“Eh Seigneur, dès ce jour sans sortir de l’Epire,
Du matin jusqu’au soir qui vous defend de rire ?”

His Majesty : What’s that you’re saying, my dear ?

Myself : Sir, I am comparing your Majesty to Pyrrhus.

His Majesty : Yes, indeed, he was a great man ; but, personally, I prefer Henry IV, whom I admire almost to the point of extravagance. He shouldn’t have kept Sully, though. Sully was a rascal, wasn’t he ?

Myself : I am sorry to disagree with you, Sir ; but I should never have thought that of Sully.

His Majesty : My dear, I assure you that I’m well up in the subject ; I have read the memoirs of the period, M. de la Fayette, Madame de Sevigné, Madame de Bavière. (*At this juncture, he nods at me and we get up from table.*)

February 28. (*Brighton.*)

The Duchess of Bedford encountered Lord Clanwilliam in my house the other evening for the first time since her return from Vienna. She never took her eyes off him ; he did not go up to her. Finally, she planted herself in front of the door, looking as if she were there for eternity, so that he could not avoid her. When he saw this, he overturned a table which was blocking a door, wrenched it open and thus got to the

stairs. It was a dramatic moment. I did not go up to the Duchess again ; I could see from the faces of those around that there was thunder in the air. She left a minute later.

Yesterday, they had the big music room lit up for me to try the organ, for the first time in my life. At the start, I was as bad as can be. I made sudden movements and deafened everybody, beginning with myself. I soon found out, however, that you have to use the pathetic stop, and I can't tell you how pathetic I was. I gave them floods of sentiment. I was wonderfully tender, and I could hear the most encouraging *ohs* and *ahs*. You know, the organ is a beautiful instrument ; this one is astonishingly powerful, and it occurs to me that you must have been able to hear a few notes at Laybach yesterday evening.

March 4.

I hear from London that they are very much occupied with the Catholic question. Everybody would like to know what the King thinks. No other important question, perhaps, depends more on his individual wishes. It is entirely a question of conscience. Now his conscience is decidedly against, his mistress's for. You must know that the King has become prodigiously devout during the past year, and is increasing in piety all the time. Lady Conyngham is a protectress of the Catholics. The other day, I found her surrounded by large tomes on theology and explanations of the oath which the King has to take at his coronation. He contends that this oath obliges him to maintain the exclusion of the Catholics from all public offices and civil rights. She wants to persuade him of the contrary ; and this is now the object towards which her influence is directed. Evidently, someone is putting her up to it, and she is the tool of the party. However, it is not likely that the report of the Commons will be accepted by

March 1821]

“TOM THUMB”

the House of Lords, and consequently the King's conscience will not be put to the proof just yet.

London, the 5th.

They are giving a farce called “Tom Thumb” at Covent Garden. The Minister comes in and says to the King : “Sire, the Queen is drunk,” and the King replies : “Damn the Queen.” The whole audience applauds these words with frenzied enthusiasm. So that is what the Radical Queen has come to. Indeed, the whole history of the Queen since her return to England will soon seem like nothing but a play. The farce nearly ended in tragedy, but only *nearly*. The wisest observers were very much alarmed ; and there is some pleasure in seeing the wise mistaken.

March 6.

It is raining in torrents today. I have not stirred out yet ; but this evening I want to attend a rout to see what is going on. It amuses me sometimes. Heavens, how stupid life is, and how stupid we are ! We know perfectly well that we cannot call yesterday back ; we repent of having wasted it miserably, but that does not prevent our wasting today. Sometimes, I indulge in sad and sober reflections ; but I do nothing about it—and we are all alike.

I am going to look in at my friend's house and take her with me to the rout. I am ready to bet that we shall be the only two women there who have no axe to grind. There are mothers concerned with the success of their daughters, and women, young and old, thinking about their own successes. There are affairs just beginning or ending or in mid-career. My friend and I are out of all that, and our detachment leaves us free to laugh at what we see, or not to look if there is nothing to laugh at, and to enjoy ourselves all the same, since we can talk together.

The 7th.

My friend could not bring herself to dress, so I went to the rout alone. The first person to pounce on me was pretty Lady Cowper, of whom I have often spoken to you. She asked me why, the day before, I had sent Clanwilliam away from my house at the same time as herself. "Simply," I said, "so as not to be prevented from going out, which I wanted to do." "I thought," she said, "that you did not care for him and I was anxious to know why ; for I find him extremely agreeable." "He is witty and impertinent and I think him very good company." "I like the little man very much," said Lady Cowper. "You would not think there was anything wrong in it, if I liked him too much ?" (The young woman is extremely naïve in spite of her intelligence, which fits in perfectly with her manners ; these, in my opinion, make her one of the most amusing people here.) "A great deal," I told her, "because you would have so much less amiability to spare for the rest of us" ; and we left it at that. Here is a woman full of wit and insight, letting her head be turned by a pair of black eyes. I left her, and a minute later she was conversing with the eyes in question. Next, I went up to the Marchioness of Hertford. "Madame de Lieven," she said, "do me a great service. I want to speak to Lady Castlereagh and I don't know how to set about it." "Would you like me to call her ?" "No, but let me go with you, for I shall never have the courage to cross the room by myself." What do you think of that at 60 ? So I guided the timid steps of the young *débutante* ; and, when I had brought those two solid monuments face to face, I looked around for somebody to talk to. I met a great many "how do you do's," who scarcely bothered to listen to my reply of "Dreadful weather, rather dull assembly" ; and these interesting conversations, and a bit of jostling into the bargain, got me to the staircase. I had spent seventeen minutes at the rout. I

have made you put up with it too ; forgive my chattering. I have become a bit too familiar with you. This isn't the way to treat the Coachman of Europe.

The 23rd.

Nothing could have been funnier than the Court yesterday. Before receiving us, the King summoned his Ministers to his presence one by one. The officers on duty ran to and fro, and there were fresh reports every minute. Had the Queen's coach been seen at her door ? Yes ; but there were only four horses. Suddenly, it was announced that an extra pair had been harnessed. Great excitement ; everybody bustled about and prepared for the attack. Finally, he had to receive us, after having kept us waiting on our feet for an hour and a half. The King had composed his face ; but Lord Liverpool had not bothered about his ; written on it in large letters was—the Queen. I did not want to miss the fun of witnessing a catastrophe ; and I stuck resolutely to my post till the end of the reception—that is to say, I remained another three hours on my feet. In the end, no Queen ; what a pity ! This is what had happened. She had written to Lord Liverpool to tell him that she wished to come to Court. He replied very politely that the King would not receive her. Her answer consisted solely of these words : “The Queen has received the Prime Minister's message” ; and yesterday morning she came to town and made preparations to attend the reception. Now this is what had been agreed : they could not oppose her coming to the palace without running the risk of a pitched battle between the Queen's army—the mob—and the King's army—the Guards. So they were going to let her enter ; and, when she got out of her coach, they were going to shut her up by herself. Then the King's Ministers would have come to enquire her wishes and to notify her of

the King's, and the scene would have ended as best it could. It is not known what prevented her from coming ; but, at least, she had the pleasure of keeping everyone on tenterhooks ; and I assure you that we were prepared for a serious encounter.

The 26th.

My drawing-room becomes stifling, for London is filling up again. Yesterday evening, Sir Walter Scott, the great English novelist, was introduced to me. He holds himself exactly like M. de Talleyrand, but talks differently ; he is full of vivacity and wit, and his ideas pour out like a waterfall. Do you know the works of another English poet, Rogers ? He wrote a little poem on the pleasures of memory which seems to me full of elegance and grace. That reminds me of your dissertation in your dream on sleep and hope. You were for giving up the old in favour of the new. I do not agree with you ; I am more constant than you are. Hope is illusory—it beguiles. But is it not memory that endears ? It seems to me that I am right and you are wrong—although, of course, you are never wrong.

April 3.

Yesterday, I dined with Prince Leopold. Nobody knew whether to accept or refuse. We decided to follow the example of the Ministers. They weighed his political conduct against his dinner ; the dinner tipped the scales ; and we all found ourselves sitting round his table. That is how one makes atonement for one's sins. If I had been consulted, I should have thrown into the same scale as his political conduct the appalling boredom of being in his house ; and the decision would have been different. Which do you think is better : to be bored or to be annoyed ? I find boredom so frightful that I prefer any other form of suffering. Our dinner yester-

April 1821] A MIXED PARTY AT PRINCE LEOPOLD'S

day was cooled by a large glass of water upset between the Duke of York and myself ; his right side and my left side were completely drenched. He observed gloomily that there was nothing more unhealthy than drinking water. Naturally, it was not he who had asked for it. That was the most important event of my day. You can see how exciting my life is.

Thursday, the 5th.

M. de Lieven has received today official leave of absence—so that is settled ; we are off ; and I shall see you once more. But a thought has just come into my head. How much longer are you going to remain in Vienna ? Happy families hate separations. What is to bring the session at Laybach to an end ?

Yesterday, I went to the most frightful rout that I have yet attended in England, at Prince Leopold's. His house is very fine for London ; but then, he had used and abused its proportions to invite everyone in London society, and everyone not in it as well. It was a very amusing mixture. The Castlereaghs were the only people who refused. So there was Royalty, Government, Opposition, Neutrals and Radicals ; frightful heat and ear-splitting music in the house, a storm, torrents of rain and many carriages damaged outside. I got into my carriage at half-past twelve to make my escape. The Jerseys joined me, and there we were till two o'clock in the morning. What do you think happened ? I don't know if Lord Jersey had been to a large dinner, or if rain and noise and fuss affect the brain, or what he can have taken into his head ; but he was suddenly seized with a fit of gallantry which caused me grave embarrassment. His wife was beside me, and he was opposite. She adores him ; she is jealous of him ; and I was almost as angry on her account as on my own. But what could I say in her presence ? Suddenly, I

remembered that he sometimes suffers from gout, and that, whether for show or for use, he always carries a cane. I took it and brought it down on his foot with all the strength I could muster. I saw the grimace he made by the light of a torch. I was delighted and suddenly he grew calm. There is an adventure for you ; I tell it you just as it happened. The moral of the story is that one should leave men out in the rain.

Brighton, April 12.

I came here early yesterday. I had gone to bed in London very late, with the result that I made my entry into the King's drawing-room like someone in a dream. There is no-one here except the Conyngham family—that goes on as usual. The weather is superb ; I walk by the sea and bathe. The life I lead here is so completely different from my life in London that, if I did not write to you just as I do in town, I should not feel I were the same person. I rest—my existence is wholly sensuous. The Duke of York arrived yesterday to swell our numbers. That makes five talkers and seven mutes. The King is in a good temper. He has just instituted an order with which I find I am the first to be invested. He has given me his portrait to wear on a blue ribbon. Here is the explanation of this favour. Lady Conyngham wants to wear it ; but it must be started by someone else ; and the public must amuse itself at the expense of that someone ; then Lady Conyngham will wear it when the joke is stale. I am the person considered most suitable. You can see how submissive I am.

The 14th.

Yesterday, I spent nearly the whole morning with the King. He told me all about his political and private affairs,

his dissatisfaction with his Ministers, the difficulty of replacing them by the Whigs. He analysed the conduct of both sides, with special reference to his complaints against the Ministers. He was in the full flush of his anger against them, when the Duke of York was announced. He put his finger to his lips, saying : "Hush, nothing in front of my brother ; for devil take me if I know which side he is on."

London, the 17th.

I left the Brighton Pavilion in a great state of excitement over a little affair which may become a big one. The King wants to bestow the Canonry of Windsor on the tutor of Lady Conyngham's children.¹ The Ministers will not tolerate this infringement of their privileges ; for they alone have these places in their gift. Within three days, Bloomfield made the trip from Brighton to London five times. The King is obstinate, and so are his Ministers ; and finally Liverpool went to Brighton yesterday to tell the King that, as long as he is his Minister, he will not give way. I do not know what has been decided. The Duke of Wellington said to me this morning : "Perhaps, at this very moment, we have already been turned out." It is certain that there are more difficulties ahead. An extraordinary state of affairs—this constant hostility between master and servants. I heard some strange things at Brighton.

The 18th.

The moment is propitious, and a pen at hand. First of all, let me introduce the characters of my story. Lady Frances Webster,² married to a jealous husband who has reason to be

¹ Sumner, afterwards Bishop of Winchester.

² Lady Frances Webster, the heroine of a tragi-comic episode described by Byron in his letters to Lady Melbourne.

jealous. She is a young and rather pretty woman, although she is a little too washed-out for my taste. But my taste has nothing to do with it, and other people admire her ; for instance, the Duke of Wellington, who had certain passages with her at Brussels five or six years ago, and nearly forgot in her company that he had the battle of Waterloo to win. There was talk of a lawsuit ; but he avoided the scandal by paying down some thousands of guineas. That is my first character : opposite her, Lord Petersham, son of Lord Harrington, who has to do the cock-crowing on the day of the Coronation.¹ He is handsome, but the maddest of all the mad English. For instance, a few years ago he was in love with a certain Mrs. Brown, and his passion declared itself in the following way. He purchased a brown carriage, brown livery, brown hat, brown spurs, brown harness, and finally, being obliged to have an embroidered coat for Court wear, he had it in brown, embroidered with dead leaves. You see the kind of a man he is. Well, he and the lady in question found each other charming, and were dying to tell one another so in a place of safety. A meeting-place was arranged ; the lady took a cab and drove to the house of the gentleman, who, as arranged, was waiting for her at the corner of the street. But another gentleman, too quick for him, seized him round the waist, threw him on the ground and pommelled him. The lady, very properly, fainted and the husband (for it was he), after having thrashed his rival at leisure, took her home and packed her off to a country house. He had found the note arranging the meeting-place, and had jumped up behind the cab ; and that was how he managed to be where he was not wanted.

¹ Lord Petersham was one of the most celebrated dandies of the period. A full-length portrait of this famous eccentric is to be found in the memoirs of Captain Gronow. For Lord Harrington's hereditary privileges, see p. 35.

April 1821]

THE KING GIVES WAY

Woburn, the 20th.

I have been here for two days ; the Duke of Wellington has been invited to meet us ; we go for walks in the morning, we talk and play cards in the evening. There are two great cedars in front of my window. They have been there for centuries ; they have seen the passing of seasons and years . they have experienced and survived all in one another's company. Our intelligence is far beneath the stupidity of those trees ; they have an air of everlasting contentment. I have never seen two trees close together without regretting that I am not a tree. Would you not like to be the other one ? There, I am arranging a fine future for you. Say thank you , behold us metamorphosed into a couple of logs.

Since I told you of the fresh bone of contention between the King and his Ministers, I must tell you the end of the story. Lord Liverpool called on the King at Brighton and very respectfully represented to him that the Canonry of Windsor could not be given to a man whose personal merits did not qualify him for that dignity. The King replied that he had given a promise, that he was in honour bound to keep it, and that his Ministers could not allow him to be dishonoured. Lord Liverpool maintained that, as the Ministers were responsible, the King's honour could not in any case be affected, and that it would be far more compromised if he persisted in trying to give posts to his mistress's protégés. The King replied : "Then you want your King to be dishonoured ?" "On the contrary," said Lord Liverpool, "but, if he persists, I can no longer serve him." "Well, my Lord, I give in ; you have won," and he showed him the door without another word. Lord Liverpool stayed another hour at Brighton ; he was not even offered a glass of water ; he went and got something at an inn and left again for London. You can rely on the truth of every word I have just told you.

May 4.

I am half-dead—I spent yesterday from two till six on my two feet in the same spot. I went home to dine and change, and at nine I went to the Court Ball, which I had to open. At three o'clock in the morning, the King dismissed the company; and, when at last I was preparing to seek my carriage, he took it into his head to retire to his apartment and invite us to have supper with him. We were six in all; I can't remember now if I had my eyes open or not. I have hardly the strength to say Good-morning to you. I saw the most comical sights yesterday; and, as I have become confidante in chief, I heard the most incredible things. The King kept me by him all evening. I am annoyed by this excessive mark of favour, for it wins me sulky looks from your Ambassador. This is very small-minded of him; I should not sulk if he were in my place. You know, there are an extraordinary number of little people in the world. I shall give great pleasure to them and to myself by going away. The King was sulky with all his Ministers.

The 11th.

Yesterday, I went through a christening, a large dinner-party and a large reception in my own house. The King was extremely pleasant and good-humoured; my little boy behaved beautifully; and, for my part, I acted recovery from child-birth with all the dignity compatible with such a farce. English etiquette insists that, at a christening, even that of a child of ten years old, which sometimes takes place here, the mother shall act the convalescent. So I lay on a couch throughout the ceremony. There was great discussion between the King and myself about the people who were to be asked to dine with him; he did not want me to ask any of the Ministers. In the end, we compromised

and there was a bit of everything. Not the Castlereaghs, because they are in mourning. Lady Conyngham came, needless to say. He would not let me have Lady Jersey, even for the reception. She was very sore about this ; but I am still hoping to bring about a reconciliation between the two powers. The most extraordinary episode occurred as we were leaving the dinner-table. Nobody really wanted the Marchioness of Hertford ; but, as her husband has an important post at Court, I could not get out of asking her, at any rate to the reception ; but I had asked her to come late and I was hoping that the room would be full before she arrived. Instead of that, she arrived first, as if she meant to poke fun at the King and Lady Conyngham. You cannot imagine a more dramatic moment—the two ladies do not speak to one another. I made a show of excessive politeness towards the former favourite, went to the far end of the drawing-room to receive her, so as to prevent her advancing, and did not let her go until some people came to my rescue. The King was grateful to me for my stratagem. Would you believe it—he was very much put out of countenance !

Calais, June 3.

I left my husband yesterday at Rochester.¹ The moment of parting was painful to us both. For ten years, we have not been away from one another for two days. The force of habit is strong ; and, now that I am deprived of his presence and his protection, I forget that differences of character and disposition now and then cause me unpleasant moments. I wept bitterly when I left him ; I am still in tears and feel quite lost.

¹ During the autumn of 1821, George IV undertook a journey to Hanover, where he encountered Prince Metternich. He had invited Madame de Lieven to be present at their meeting. Count Lieven, by accident or design, did not arrive till some days later, having been summoned to St. Petersburg on official business.

about stupidity, and that itself is thinking. But if you have not even thought to fall back on ! I really don't know what people mean when they tell me : "With the resources of your mind, you won't be bored" ; it is a commonplace and it is perfect nonsense. I maintain—though it is conceited of me to maintain—that people of intelligence are much more easily bored than fools. I am sure that you will disprove this in the most logical manner in the world. You know, our correspondence has already given me plenty of examples of this happening. I catch at the tail-end of some little idea, and reproduce it for your benefit. But you, you grasp the whole, and a week later you show me what I have missed and what I was not able to express.

Frankfurt, the 25th.

The Duke of Wellington continues to complain ; he tells me again that the Ministers cannot hold out, that they are being slighted in every possible way, and that they will have to decamp. He tells me, too, that the King is mad—this by post, with his name at the end of the letter. If the King is mad, his Ministers are very feeble. Without a word, they have resigned themselves to seeing all the ceremonial offices distributed to their enemies. The King has appointed, as pages of honour at his Coronation, the sons of all the great Opposition families, the sons of Lord Jersey, of the Duke of Bedford. The Duke of Devonshire is to carry the orb. The immediate result of these favours is the defection of the Ministerial supporters.

Schlungenbad, August 15.

We are told that the Queen of England has died.¹ In doing so, she made one last difficulty for her enemies—she upset

¹ The Queen, who had fallen ill at the beginning of the month, died on August 7th.

ENTS AND DEATH OF QUEEN

th a Memoir of Her Majesty, an Elegiac Ode, &c.



THE SPIRIT OF THE QUEEN CONVEYED TO THE
REALMS OF ETERNAL GLORY!!!

OF THE LAST MOMENTS AND DEATH OF HER I

it regret : I have no great reason
d to life."

and Sunday, in spite of some
ptoms which inspired the physician
she still expressed her firm con-
should die. She seemed to feel
ing on the subject, and rejoiced
her release from trouble—her
ic malice of her enemies. She
is world, whether in England or

is a pleasure to contemplate my approaching
" death; and why may I not speak what I feel ?"
All these observations were made with such
sweetness of manner and such calmness of tone,
as to make an impression never to be effaced
from the minds of those who were present.

The night between Monday and Tuesday was
passed without sleep, owing, it is believed, to
that restless anxiety which usually accompanies
the process of mortification. On Tuesday af-

increased inflammation was visible
and the post-haste attendance of
was desired. At four o'clock Mr
summoned to Her MAJESTY's
that time a marked alteration—
which could scarcely be mistake
place in her appearance. The il-
ferer herself seemed perfectly
change; and, amid the tears of
rounded her, spoke with calmness

From a contemporary broad-sheet in the British Museum

Oct. 1821]

LADY MARY DEERHURST

the festivities in Dublin. And, in London, what are they to do with her chaste remains? That is the only embarrassment she is, from now on, in a position to cause them. She did her best—but her death at the moment is a mere luxury, for alive she no longer inconvenienced anyone

Frankfurt, October 6.

Last night, I had a very entertaining neighbour—an Englishwoman of great family, Lady Mary Deerhurst, the future Countess of Coventry. While in England, she was involved in an affair which was extremely diverting, but so unprintable that I really cannot give you the pleasure of hearing it. The result would have been a divorce, but her husband, who was neither *sans peur* nor *sans reproche*, did not dare to bring a lawsuit, and nothing happened to her except that she was tacitly excluded from society. She is extremely pretty; I used to meet her in society before the affair, but I had completely lost sight of her since. Suddenly, she appeared at Frankfurt and spent a night in the bedroom next to mine. I had been asleep for about an hour, when I was woken up by a conversation in French between a soft and charming little voice and a bass one. It was the lady and her courier. The courier is called Louis, and she was asking Louis where he thought they should sleep the next night. He suggested Heidelberg. "And the day after tomorrow," she said, "couldn't we spend the night at Genoa?" "Impossible." "Not even if I got up very early?" At this like a fool I burst out laughing, and the lady exclaimed: "Heavens, someone is listening." Then they lowered their voices, which did not prevent me from hearing them; for there was nothing but a door between us, and Louis told her that Genoa was in Italy. "Oh, ah," said the lady. After that their voices got softer and softer. I thought of the Queen of England and

Bergami ; but I am sure that it was a very inappropriate thought. In the end, I fell asleep again. Next morning, the lady had gone, and I found out later from my footman, who knew hers, that she was going to Constantinople and thence to Egypt. That is absolutely in the Caroline tradition. I'm sure she will want to spend the next night but one among the Turks, unless her courier has taught her some geography in the meantime.

London, November 30.

I reached London the day before yesterday ; I left Paris on Sunday. I made haste, and at Calais I took advantage of a slight lull in the storm which has been raging for the last fortnight. The sea was still frightfully rough. I had to leave the packet-boat that night and finish my trip in a little boat in the pitch dark. And now, after these vicissitudes, here I am back in London, overwhelmed with visitors. The only one who has not rushed to see me is your ambassador. That is just his old way of behaving, aggravated by his ill temper at our having met. I think the Duke of York must have thought that my two hands had been multiplied by twelve ; for he never stopped kissing them, and said to me a score of times : "I am afraid I shall annoy you by telling you how devoted I am." There is a mixture of affection and shyness in this phrase, which I might find touching if he had more wit, more hair, no belly and a paler complexion. You can see that, with all these conditions, the Duke of York's chances are small.

You cannot imagine how pleased Lord Castlereagh was to see me again. He came in with open arms ; I simply had to open mine half-way, so that we gave each other a kind of semi-tender embrace. He began by asking, very naïvely, if you really liked him. I dwelt on the subject at some length.

He spoke of your wit, of your views, of the satisfaction and the pleasure that meeting you in Hanover had given him, of the impossibility of our opinions ever differing, and of the additional feeling of security in this respect with which the visit to Hanover had left him. He wanted to know if we had talked together about him. He told me : "It is extraordinary how much at ease I feel when I can talk to Prince Metternich ; it is the same with you ; my ideas are all fluid." I told him that "fluid" was charming and that I should tell you ; he gave a loud "Ha, ha !" Afterwards, he told me everything he had done to reconcile the King with Lord Liverpool. You will hear all this from Prince Esterhazy's reports. He ended up by saying : "The result of my negotiations is good in fact ; and it will be good as experience ; for the King will learn that it is not so easy to dismiss a Minister, and the Prime Minister will learn that it must be remembered, above all things, that the King is master." In short, he seems absolutely convinced that the Government is now immovable. He gives you a great deal of credit for the reconciliation, because you mollified the King. He continues to be in favour of the trip next year ; we must not let his enthusiasm cool. Urge your ambassador to keep the King and his Ministers up to it. I shall not tell him that I am to be of the party, or he might do just the opposite.

Brighton, December 9.

"Ah, my dear friend, I was longing to embrace you,"—and thereupon three great smacking kisses. At table, we heard of nothing but Hanover. He [the King] took no notice of anyone but me ; I am in much too high favour. Yesterday, the King sent for his Ministers, excepting Lord Liverpool and the Duke of Wellington, whom he never invites. He informed Lord Londonderry that I should be here ; that means

he thinks there is something between us. He informed me the day before that you were the lover of the Duchess of Cambridge. At table, he told Londonderry to come and sit by me. He has a passion for encouraging the affairs he suspects. However, after that first piece of consideration, he never allowed my attention to stray; he talked to me without stopping, and I hardly had a chance to exchange two words with my neighbour on my right. As for Castlereagh, he had a member of the Opposition next to him, someone who hardly speaks even to his friends; so that poor Castlereagh was reduced to falling on two enormous helpings of roast mutton. I do not know if it was because we were at table, or if he would have thought of the same comparison at any other moment; but yesterday, talking of the harmony which prevails amongst the Great Powers, he said: "*Les Cabinet alliés sont tous dans un potage.*" I thought how you would have laughed, and thinking of your face set me off too.

The 13th.

We are still kept here; I am delighted. The King is in a more talkative mood than ever; and the moment the bottle goes round is when I gather in my richest harvest. Yesterday, he was on the subject of high politics—I wish I could remember his ideas and the order in which he gave them. I know that three times I bit my lip so as not to laugh, and that I ended up by eating all the orange-peel I could find, so as to give my mouth something to do to hide its twitching if the danger grew too great. Everything you had said to him was in his oration—I recognised the substance, I even recognised a few phrases; but everything was plunged in such confusion that it was impossible to disentangle the real text of his speech. We had Poland, mystery-mongers, M. de la Harpe, the Don Cossacks, a great deal about gold, my wit, the Hanoverian

sappers, who wear green aprons with gold fringes, Benjamin Constant and Madame de Deken, the Hungarian infantry and the prophecies of the King in 1814, Jesus Christ and the Emperor Alexander who now sees things more clearly, for Prince Metternich says so, and finally the importance of remaining openly united. The end was the best part. The whole speech was addressed to me ; but in a tone of voice which obliged everyone else to listen in silence. We should still be there, if Admiral Nagle had not begun to snore so loudly that the King lost patience and broke up the meeting.

London, December 23.

Since we left Brighton, the King has seen nobody. Love which allows nothing to interfere with it is all very fine ; but how extraordinary when its object is Lady Conyngham ! Not an idea in her head ; not a word to say for herself ; nothing but a hand to accept pearls and diamonds with, and an enormous balcony to wear them on. Is it really possible to be in love with a woman who accepts diamonds and pearls :

The 26th.

Walter Scott has just published a new novel, *The Pirate*. As before, the book is in three volumes, neither more nor less, and contains the same number of pages ; but, what is more important, it reveals the same talent, the same power of imagination, and a subtlety of observation, a fidelity in characterisation that no novelist before Scott has ever achieved. It is asking a great deal to expect you to read a three-volume novel in a language that you do not know very well ; but it is a pity you do not read Walter Scott—it is not a waste of time as it is with the others.

I hear from Paris that our sons have fallen out over the column in the Place Vendôme. Victor reproached the Allies

with not having pulled it down ; Paul disputed their right to do so. Victor maintained that the Austrians had the right, since they had entered Paris ; Paul declared that they would never have got there without the Russians. So each of them began to go through the list of respective victories and defeats ; and, at the end of the reckoning, they separated very much annoyed with one another. I do not know who undertook to reconcile them ; but, next day, they shook hands and agreed not to mention the Place Vendôme again.

Saturday, the 29th.

At last, your little man has been asked to Brighton ; it is good news for us ; and he is recovering his equanimity. He came to talk to us at Covent Garden yesterday, radiant, affectionate and squinting less than usual. Today, we are going together to Lady Cowper's ; that invitation, too, which he had asked me to get for him, adds to his good humour ; and now I am only afraid of an excess of it. Do you know how he shows it sometimes ? The other day he had a fit of gaiety and suddenly went up to and tickled a respectable spinster in a drawing-room. Can you imagine the unfortunate female's alarm ? Everyone is recounting this episode. I was not present myself ; but I believe the story, for one can never calculate the nature or the extent of his aberrations. I imagine he never mistakes me for a spinster : his accesses of affection for me are exceedingly rare.

I feel, or I fear, that Madame de Metternich may change her favourable opinion of my son ; and I am specially afraid that, as she probably thought better of him than he deserved, she may now relapse into thinking worse. He has schoolboy manners which may put her off. One has to take into account what school education is like here. Boys learn nothing but Latin and Greek, Greek and Latin ; and then they are up to

Jan. 1822] LADY CONYNGHAM'S SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

all sorts of pranks. They all vie with one another in playing tricks on their companions or on their masters ; and I fancy that Paul was good at that. I don't suggest that he will try it on now ; but he has still certain habits that Victor must, at least, find surprising. So here I am worrying about your son and my son and your recommendation and Madame de Metternich, and I can't stop myself. You have done so much for me that I should like Paul to be a little prodigy, so as to do you credit.

Wherstead, Tuesday, January 8, 1822.

Here I am with my friend ; I shall spend the week with her. I believe I neglected to tell you of a new character who has entered the lists at Brighton, and who deserves mention, since he is playing, and will play, a part. He is a Methodist parson,¹ a young man of 28, handsome and healthy ; he enjoys the confidence of the favourite, he is her spiritual director, and he exercises spiritual and temporal control over all the King's movements. He does not often appear ; but I saw him once at dinner while I was staying at Brighton. He sits opposite the King, and prays aloud before dinner. They listen to him very piously, which looks extremely comic. Meanwhile, this is causing great scandal among the clergy. The Methodists are at war with the English Church ; and the little parson, with his beautiful complexion, seems to me very anxious to become a bishop. I forgot to say that, when, after dinner, certain red boxes are brought to the King, he gives the contents to the Methodist to read, so that St. John, as well as you, goes through his hands. The whole gang are extremely

¹ This passage apparently refers to Sumner, the tutor of Lady Conyng-
ham's children and George IV's chaplain. His influence on the King,
according to Mr. Roger Fulford, was "wholly admirable." He intro-
duced family prayers into the royal circle ; but, though a Low Church-
man, he could scarcely be described as a Methodist.

amusing to watch. Molière would have made marvellous use of them.

London, the 12th.

Madame de Münster is pregnant, and M. de Chateaubriand is coming here as ambassador. Those are my two pieces of news for today ; and it is not my fault if they do not go well together. How can one possibly conceive when one looks like Madame de Münster ² I am terrified about the religious passion which my Continental friend ¹ feels for the author of *Le Génie du Christianisme*—I tremble lest she should pursue me with her enthusiasm. What am I to do if she does ? She will insist on details ; I shall tell her that I believe he adores her. As a matter of fact, she is an extremely good-natured woman, but I have not the heart to treat her severely. Perhaps we shall find we are soul-mates, M. de Chateaubriand and I ; that might be very fine and fashionable, but I fancy I shall stick to metaphysics. To begin with, he would bore me. that is obvious. And I should never be able to treat the subject with the necessary gaiety. Nevertheless, I think she is right to indulge in this religious passion ; it is always something to do.

Brighton, January 25.

We have been here for two days. I have an inflamed eye—the heat of the Pavilion and the lamps do not improve it. The King is a little put out ; all the same, he is in high good humour ; there is nobody here but the family. Wellington has been invited for the first time ; he is expected the day after tomorrow. The King told me that he had been asked for my benefit Londonderry for my benefit ; Wellington

¹ The Duchess of Cumberland.

Jan. 1822]

LOVE AND DISCRETION

for my benefit—I should like to know which he thinks I prefer. I let him do it, for it is all to the good.

The 26th.

I fancy that I must have something of the courtier in my make-up. In spite of my eye, I have been dancing. It is true that the ball was at stake; but then, my eye was at stake too. The ball went off well, and my eye is none the worse.

There is a little affair going on here. The Marchioness's son is to marry an heiress with an income of £40,000. Meanwhile, he is in love with Lady Cowper—she is here with us. She likes the young man; but she is afraid to encourage him, because that would upset the marriage and put her out of favour at Court. The young man, too, is anxious not to annoy his mother. So, on both sides, there is a struggle between love and discretion. We have a common drawing-room, which we enter from the wings, for all our rooms open into it. Thus, we have encounters, little *tête-à-têtes*, frights, despairs, a husband, and sometimes interruptions. The day before yesterday, the young man had to stay in his room; he was not allowed to come to dinner. I make fine moral speeches, which fall on deaf ears, as moral speeches always do when they run counter to inclination.

The King speaks about the journey with less enthusiasm. "If I live, if I am well, if European politics permit." I do not like all these "ifs." But there is plenty of time between now and June; and I am not so easily discouraged.

The 26th.

The Duke of Wellington came to dine yesterday. I like his manner; he behaves in a lordly way with his master, but he laughs rather too much with me; I am afraid they may

suspect the cause of his hilarity. The King is far from well, though he comes down for dinner ; but he scarcely walks and he eats nothing. In spite of this, he sings and talks politics ; he invariably addresses himself to me.

The Duke of Wellington was to leave tomorrow, but the King is keeping him here ; he gives me credit for this favour. When he wanted to take his leave just now, the King pressed him to stay. He made the excuse that he had to go back for a Council of the Ministers. "*Damn the Council*," was all the King said ; and that was that. When we went upstairs, the Duke of Wellington told me that he was very much annoyed at having to write a long complicated letter to his colleagues. I undertook to write it, and this is what I wrote : "*By His Majesty's command, damn the Council*," signed Wellington, and addressed to the Cabinet. He sent the letter.

I wish you were here to laugh. You cannot imagine how astonished the Duke of Wellington is. He had not been here before, and I thoroughly enjoy noting the kind of remark and the kind of surprise that the whole household evokes in a new-comer. I do not believe that, since the days of Heliogabalus, there have been such magnificence and such luxury. There is something effeminate in it which is disgusting. One spends the evening half-lying on cushions ; the lights are dazzling ; there are perfumes, music, liqueurs—"Devil take me, I think I must have got into bad company." You can guess who said that, and the tone in which it was said. Here is one single detail about the establishment. To light the three rooms, used when the family is alone, costs 150 guineas an evening ; when the apartment is fully opened up, it is double that.

I brought my little boy with me ; he is charming to the King, but polite to everyone else. He is very nice and he adores Chinese grotesques. The Duke of York is expected

tomorrow. Lady Conyngham's children are going to act a play in French. I asked to be allowed to read the piece : it is by someone in society, and the chief character is the Vicomte de Chateaubriand, taken off by his footman. You must admit that this is a happy idea, the day before his arrival as ambassador.

London, January 31.

We all came back to London this morning. We left the King very ill ; he is tortured by gout and employs the most violent remedies to get rid of it. He looks ghastly ; he is plunged in gloom ; he talks about nothing but dying. I have never seen him so wretched ; he did everything he could to pull himself together, but in vain. The favourite is in despair, especially over his temper, which is as sour as can be. The other day, he turned Bloomfield¹ out of the house ; the least thing gets on his nerves—a crooked candle produces a storm of abuse. He treated the Duke of York very badly ; I do not think he addressed two words to him. He is always very nice to me. Yesterday, at dinner, he asked me if I would do my best to persuade the lady to go on the journey, “for I have sworn I will not budge without her.” This is a forbidden topic between them, since she absolutely refuses to go with him. However, she promised me that she would make him go. I assured her that she would not succeed. I like challenging a silly woman ; it works well.

I see no means of bringing about a reconciliation with Lady Londonderry. There is the bitterest prejudice against her, though her husband is regarded with affection. In general, the King is on good terms with his Ministers ; for he is beginning once again to get out of temper with the other side. He grows more arrogant and despotic every day ; the

¹ See note on p. 188.

favourite has complained to me ; and her son is leaving, because he cannot stand it any longer. But she drags the King into every sentence, as if she were a *parvenue*. You cannot imagine what idiocies go on in that household ; it is like being in a mad-house.

February 1.

Neumann is keeping his courier waiting ; and I am adding very hurriedly all I left out when my eye was bad. First, it is a matter of doing a good deed. You have had a certain Baron Trenchi arrested in Milan. He may deserve it. But would it not be possible to soften his fate ? I knew him in London ; he was well received in society. He is a good fellow and everybody likes him. I implore you not to hang him—in fact, to shield him as much as you think practicable.

Tuesday, the 5th.

The Duke of York was very anxious that I should go to the House today for the opening of Parliament. It appears that the King likes people to go to look at him with his crown on his head. As I pride myself on being a good courtier, I shall go this morning. In nine years, I have only been once to the opening. Then I went to hear the speech ; today, I shall go to see the head-dress. I shall be surprised if the wind does not carry me from here to the House of Lords. The storm has overturned a number of carriages ; you can imagine that I should easily be blown away.

February 6.

It was by great good luck that I went to the House of Lords yesterday. Have I ever spoken to you of Lady Morley ? I must be growing old, for I am losing my memory. The

King is carrying on a flirtation with her ; and yesterday in Parliament, to which she went, there were indescribable oglings. When he came in, he seemed quite crushed. His heavy robes, his crown slipping down on to his nose, his great train making his fat neck look still fatter—everything conspired to heighten the comic effect. He avoided the steps in mounting ; when he was finally seated on the throne, he looked prostrate. A moment later, he caught sight of me—a smile. A row higher, his eyes fell on Lady Cowper—another smile. Higher still, Lady Morley : he beamed. He began letting his glance wander down the rows ; but more often he looked up, with his eyelids going hard at it—and there was His Majesty quite recovered and perfectly well. It was a quarter of an hour before the Commons appeared at the Bar of the House. During the whole time there was complete silence ; and the signalling never stopped for a second.

Yesterday, I heard from Baxard of the bargain which has just been struck, between the anonymous owner of the autograph letters from the Emperor Alexander to Napoleon, and the purchaser, also anonymous, of those letters, who must be acting for the Emperor. The letters, numbering twenty-nine, have been bought for £3000. Murray, the publisher, had them here. I made enquiries about possible copies. There are two, in the hands of the Opposition. The letters, which my informant has read, are full of fabrications against England.

I do not like your theory about dreams ; it seems to me that you condemn them too thoughtlessly. I prefer the image of life to that of death ; and the expression “to sleep like the dead”—that is to sleep without dreams—has always made a singularly unpleasant impression on me. My imagination creates charming images for itself. You do not like illusory sentiments. But are not all the pleasures of the

senses more or less chimærical ? What is left of them afterwards ? Nothing ; and yet they have given us pleasure. Come, I advise you to indulge in the pleasures of dreaming ; it is always something to fall back on.

Friday, the 8th.

The Duke of Wellington was talking very apprehensively yesterday about what is going to happen in Parliament ; and, as he examines every question conscientiously, the situation must be bad indeed to make him so downcast. All the landed proprietors, from the duke to the smallest farmer, are crying aloud for reduction in taxes. If they get it—which is what is feared—the national credit goes to the devil (you can see that these are not my words) and, lo and behold, we are bankrupt. The Ministers ask these gentlemen to show a little more patience. They promise them, four months from to-day, to reduce the interest on the debt from 5 to 3 per cent., and explain that by then they will be in a position to make great reductions in taxation. The gentlemen reply that it is all very well to advise patience, which has been preached at them for twenty years ; they want results and immediate results. We shall see what will happen. The Government is frightened : this concerns not only the Ministers, but the whole country. And it is not ten days since they thought they were doing capitally. Here the greatest difficulties take one by surprise ; they spring up like mushrooms. Ireland, for its part, goes from bad to worse. Is it possible that they will be reduced to levying troops ? And what will they pay them with ?

The 15th.

Yesterday, I spent the evening at a rout which was distinguished from the usual tiresome amusements of that kind

by a great number of falls. The hostess, Lady Gurney, prides herself on her house being very French—instead of carpets, she has had parquet floors put into her rooms—floors which shine like glass and are just as slippery. English legs, being accustomed to surer ground, were all the while in the most comical difficulties. Some curious accidents resulted; we looked like a skating party.

Friday, the 22nd.

Last night I did not sleep a wink, and I do not believe it would be possible to be kept awake for a more absurd reason. I was dining yesterday with the Duke of Wellington. A certain Mr. Bankes¹ was at dinner, a great traveller who has explored the sources of the Nile and, since then, has crossed the most inaccessible parts of Asia. But that has nothing to do with my lying awake. Here is the reason. He was in Spain during the last war, and he had been living in disguise at Pampeluna while the English laid siege to the city. He went to dine with the commanding officer, who regaled him with a meal of rats washed down with strong drink, and after dinner obliged him to buy a Raphael, which he had stolen from the Escorial, and a donkey, which I don't think he had stolen from anybody. Bankes had spent all his money in purchasing the Raphael; and, a few days later, he had only just what he needed to pay his passage on the boat which was to bring him back to England, together with his donkey, to which he was peculiarly attached. When he presented himself on board with the animal the captain declared that "*the jackass should pay, like a gentleman.*" At this, there was a burst of laughter; and, from that moment, the poor man could not open his mouth or move his arms

¹ William John Bankes, a school friend of Byron; travelled extensively in Egypt and Arabia.

(he makes the quaintest gestures) without my exploding. I laughed for two hours, and spent nine hours of sleeplessness in bed ; I had become almost hysterical with laughing.

The 23rd.

While I was dressing for dinner yesterday, my husband entered to tell me there was a fire in the house. The first order he gave was to admit nobody. The porters barricaded the doors ; and, while they were at it, the house filled with strangers who came in by the roof. They were insurance agents. I learned two facts on that occasion : first, that these agents have very good reason to believe that people often set their houses on fire to get the insurance money ; second, that all houses have secret passages through the roofs. So these gentlemen may always be expected, and I have learned something I did not know yesterday.

The King's doctors say, in the strictest confidence, that he has the beginnings of dropsy—alas for the journey ! The Duke of York is much concerned about what may happen ; with me, he has detailed conversations ; and I have an idea that his reign will be neither as calm nor as easy-going as people seem to expect from his character. He clings obstinately to old-fashioned views on every subject, and prides himself on doing everything himself. I think Lord Liverpool begins to suspect this, even to the extent of praying it will not happen. He did not feel that way a little while ago.

Yesterday, I received the funniest letter imaginable from the Frankfurt Rothschild. Four pages of sentiment, begging my help for the Jews of his town, and asking for the withdrawal of certain instructions with regard to them that Count Münster must have sent to the Minister of Hanover. I, the patroness of the Jews ! There is a kind of naïve confidence in it all, which is at once laughable and touching.

Feb. 1822]

LORD LONDONDERRY

Talking of Frankfurt, Mr. Lamb is going back there. A great number of English diplomats are here, and a victim is needed ; for Parliament will ask what is the use of paying Ministers, if they amuse themselves in London. The others have each one a pregnant wife. Lamb, who has not this excuse, is paying for all who are more concerned for posterity than he is himself. Good-bye ; this letter will find you perhaps angry ; perhaps joyful—I doubt it ; perhaps busy—I am sure of it. Does your pulse beat quickly or slowly ? Slowly I hope ; for, if it did not, you would be dead already. Have you ever let St. John feel it ?

February 23.

I am writing to you, because I like having a letter already begun in my drawer. Moreover, I have abandoned my journal since I began writing to you so regularly, and I must have a journal—all these are not very flattering motives ; but we are no longer on a ceremonious footing.

In spite of the moderate heat, I had yesterday to endure a long snail's pace walk with Londonderry. He knows where I take my walk ; as soon as he sees me, he gets off his horse ; and, since yesterday I was walking without my husband, he thought it was too good an opportunity not to be prolonged till Parliament met. The fact is that, being accustomed to tell one another everything, we no longer have anything to say, except *tête-à-tête* ; and then we never stop. I really believe that he loves me with all his heart. He asked me what I was "building" for this summer—we discussed the chances of the King's journey. He is very anxious that he should make it, but anxious, especially, to be himself at the congress at Florence, holding himself aloof, but at the same time prepared to take part in any discussions that may occur. He told me that you very much wanted him to

be there ; I assured him that we all wanted it. I believe that he is determined on this plan. He is worried about the King's health. . . . He does not speak quite frankly with me yet, because he thinks I am more intimate with the heir presumptive than actually I am. All the same, I am often surprised at what he says to me ; he must trust me, and he is right. He and Wellington know Capo d'Istria's nickname, and we never call him anything but St. John. I have not robbed you of the credit of inventing it.

March 1.

I believe you when you tell me that I do not bore you—for, if it is true, as you say, that I am sometimes witty, sometimes stupid, and strong and weak and a number of dissimilar things all at once, it must be very entertaining. And then, my errors of calculation—saying too much and still being afraid that you will not understand me. Indeed, you rouse my curiosity about my letters. One day I will have them bound. To whom shall we leave our correspondence ? Of what good man shall we make the fortune ? You know, I should very much like to come back in sixty years' time to read our letters and to see what posterity thinks of these two intelligent people whose combined genius was devoted to snatching a fortnight once every three years.

I always study the debates in the French Chamber of Deputies—especially the pages where I read in parenthesis—tumult—murmurs—laughter, etc.—and, whenever there is a row, I wake up. Since you are moved to anger by what you call the mixture of arrogance, inertia, dishonesty and blundering which is to be heard in that tribunal, might you not yourself, one day, feel a desire to go to the assistance of these unfortunates ? And, that granted, would you not agree that a Parliamentary career is the one most fitted to

rouse the ambition of a public character ? Is there a single moment in Lord Castlereagh's brilliant progress that, in his eyes, is worth the applause he wins, even from his enemies, after an eloquent speech ? I believe that England is perhaps at this moment still the only country that deserves such a constitution. But don't imagine that I have turned Liberal again ; all I mean to say is that an intelligent man ought to wish to be an Englishman. Come now, you are an intelligent man. What do you think ?

Monday, the 4th.

I feel obliged to pass on to you what Lord Londonderry confided to me yesterday. He does not know if he will write to you himself on account of his colleagues, who would think it too official a step. But he wants the point made clear to you. I did not think it was right to offer to pass on the explanation to you ; but as, after a long preamble, he spoke to me in great detail on the matter, I concluded that he wanted to kill two birds with one stone. Here is his speech : "We are in perfect agreement, Prince Metternich and I, on the fundamentals of every question ; but, in the application of our views on the Eastern Question,¹ I find a shade of difference which makes me anxious to bring him round to my own point of view. He wants the rest of the affair entrusted to Commissioners ; personally, I do not think the negotiations are sufficiently far advanced to be entrusted to *unskilled* hands. Besides, although the discussion turns on separate interests, since the consequences of that discussion might be war, it follows that those interests are the interests of all, and that it is essential to entrust them to negotiators

¹ Otherwise in many respects closely identified, the policies of Austrian and Russian statesmen were often at variance over the affairs of Turkey in Europe. Russia was traditionally anti-Turkish ; while Austria was inclined to support Turkey as a useful check on Russian self-aggrandisement.

of the *greatest ability*. That is the idea which I should like to be able to convey to him as strongly as possible, although I am not permitted to address myself directly to him on the subject."

Brighton, March 10, 1822.

We came here yesterday for dinner—my friend, my other friend,¹ all the brothers, a few other men and the Duke of Wellington. I succeeded in getting him invited and he is as pleased as a child. The King is ill and anxious; he talks of nothing but his approaching end. Today, my Lords Liverpool and Londonderry came to swell the company. I have just come back from the chapel, where we had a sermon lasting two hours. It has left me sleepy rather than edified.

The 11th.

That was all I could manage to tell you yesterday; I begin again today without much greater hope, for I am never left to myself a minute. Londonderry and his companion have been very well treated; the companion is certainly the oddest figure imaginable. He has been making the most amusing blunders. I am always the refuge of poor people who are ashamed to beg, and really I gave him admirable advice as to how he should set about it. He followed my instructions quite mechanically; and, when he found himself placed next to Lady Conyngham, he did not know what to say to her. We nearly died with laughing. He looked at me with questioning eyes—that was all very well, but what was he to say? My friend adds greatly to the fun, for her behaviour is excellent. But how long will it last? The King has not said a word yet about the journey. I am

¹ Lady Cowper.

looking for a chance of speaking about it ; but, if an opportunity does not occur, I shall broach the subject quite crudely. Esterhazy told me the other day that he could get no definite answer.

Tuesday, the 12th.

The motive of the Ministers' visit was to induce the King to agree to their proposal for the reduction of his civil list, a question on which they expected bitter opposition. When they entered the King's study, he came to meet them and said that he knew the reason of their visit, that he approved it completely, and that he thought it right and proper that he should share the sacrifices which they were imposing on themselves. It was a great and a pleasant surprise for them to meet with a reception exactly the opposite of all they had anticipated. The result is general good humour and gaiety, and keen disappointment on the part of the Opposition. This development is of double advantage to the Ministers : it increases their popularity and is evidence of their good relations with the King.

Yesterday, I spent the evening dancing, not from choice, but of necessity. The King wanted a ball. There were only three of us women capable of dancing. In such company, I became quite important ; and I behaved like a good courtier.

The favourite does nothing but yawn ; the King is in a frightful state of melancholy. Bloomfield has been turned out, or so it seems. He no longer appears in the magic lantern,¹ and his name is never mentioned. The fact is that the political existence of such a person is against all rules ; that it was an abuse which crept in gradually as a result of

¹ "The magic lantern" would appear to have been a small glass-walled sitting-room in the Pavilion to which only favourites were admitted.

the King's absence from London, and of his feeling of isolation from any direct contact with his Ministers ; and that just now the moment seems ripe to abolish the post altogether. This would produce much closer contact with the members of the Cabinet, and everyone would be pleased.

I beg you to forgive my scrawl, and perhaps my ideas, too ; I cannot write in public, and it is thus I am condemned to treat you here.

The 14th.

My friend is longing to see the end of this visit. She cannot bear to be embarrassed or bored ; it is quite a new thing for her. She is dying to be able to make fun of this little performance with her neighbours ; and she gets impatient when she sees me putting up with it all as if I enjoyed it. But really the fact is that I observe scenes worthy of the finest comedy. Yesterday, she and I spent two hours in the morning by the sea, moving as the tide came in. There is nothing I like so well as the sound and the motion of the waves. Did I ever tell you what happened to me on this same Brighton beach ? I was here in the summer of the year '18. My husband had brought me here for my health. I was quite well in myself, but I was desperately depressed. My mind was so vacant that I could think of no reason for going on living. The third Canto of *Childe Harold* had just come out ; I had taken it with me ; and, to give myself something to do, I had begun to translate it. I worked at it enthusiastically in my room, and I always took the poem with me when I went to sit on a certain rocky point, which is quite dry at low tide, but completely submerged at high. Lord Byron says terrible and sublime things about death by drowning, and I had always thought that passage particularly fine. I was reading it one day on the rock ; and I felt that

nothing could be simpler than to stay on the point until the sea had covered it. I conceived the idea quite dispassionately. I cannot help believing, when I think of the episode, that we all have a certain tendency to madness, which only the right circumstances are needed to bring out. Evidently, my hour of madness had come. I experienced no distress of any kind, nothing but a great unconcern in my heart and in my head. I waited on the rock a good half-hour, my mind made up ; but the tide did not rise. When at last it did, my madness ebbed as the water advanced. In short, I did not wait long enough even to get my feet wet, and I did right. I laughed at myself as I went home ; for, at that moment, nothing seemed so delightful as the small details of life, and nothing so stupid as the desire to die. Since then, whenever I am in trouble, I have only to think of my little adventure at Brighton to put myself in a good humour, or at least to make myself appreciate that pleasant thing—existence.

I am writing you nonsense again today ; but it is difficult to derive much intellectual stimulus from a dinner where sauces were the main topic of conversation, and an evening spent in playing patience. All my efforts go to smothering my friend's wit—she has promised me to be stupid while we are here. That is in the most orthodox Royal tradition.

The 15th.

The King and I were talking about you yesterday ; and he turned to his lady and said he would give anything in the world for her to meet you. "Well," I said, "so she will next summer, I hope." The King sighed and said to me in German that he feared he might not be able to undertake the journey. I replied that I was not at all afraid of that ; that he had made a solemn promise ; that everyone was counting on it

and making preparations, and that he was too honourable to break his word. He said with another sigh : "If I break my promise, it will be her fault."

I have made an unpleasant discovery about Madame Esterhazy, and I fancy her husband is at the bottom of it. They spent their last visit here saying all sorts of disagreeable things about me. It was no use, for the King repeated everything to me ; but the intention was there all the same. The story was that I thought the favourite a fool and her lover a madman. Now, even if I had said that, I should not have confided in Madame Esterhazy, nor indeed should I have confided anything to her ; and, considering all I have done, it is ungrateful to credit me with a remark which, in any case, was not meant to be repeated in this quarter. The fact is, that both husband and wife are mean enough to be jealous of me ; I shall revenge myself by speaking well of them both when I get a chance. That will put them clearly in the wrong.

London, the 16th.

Lord and Lady Stewart¹ are back from the country and made their reappearance yesterday ; I saw them in the crowd but could not reach them. She looked to me like one of those effigies you see in Greek churches, with no colour or shading but loaded with jewels. She was wearing enough to buy a small German principality.

The 20th.

I spoke to Lady Stewart yesterday ; her appearance has not improved. She has lost her eyelashes and a tooth, and she is enormously stout. She is bored in Vienna. I told

¹ Brother and sister-in-law of Lord Castlereagh (since the death of his father, Lord Londonderry).

her there was nothing simpler than not to go back ; I said that in the interests of a good many people. Stewart looks bored with his "little wife" ; after he had brought her up to me, he took her back to her place, and then returned quite lively and cheerful. His remarks about the new magic-lantern régime amused me. He is quite right in saying that passion displays itself much more in looks than in words. You can imagine the fun for yourself. Alas, he, too, is doubtful about the journey.

The 23rd.

Everybody is laughing about a statue which is to be put up in Hyde Park, opposite the Duke of Wellington's house, in honour of his victories. The idea and the execution of it are Lady Spencer's ; she is the most prudish of all the English great ladies. Seven years ago, she started a subscription for the statue and allowed nobody but women to contribute. It is to be a heroic figure without a scrap of clothing. On the base will be inscribed the names of all the ladies who have contributed to the erection of the statue. It is a quaint idea.

Thursday, the 28th.

I have started on a fresh round of dissipation since my son arrived. Yesterday, I took him to a ball for the first time. Mother-love is all very fine ; but I should soon get tired of the job if I often had to do as I did yesterday evening ; I did not go to bed till two o'clock. For the rest, I divided my evening between Lord Londonderry and the Duke of Wellington ; and they helped me to keep awake. The former is always full of affection for you and confidence in your intentions ; but something must be done, and he is anxious to know exactly what.

If you hear any remarks about my intimacy with him, please do not think there is any harm in it. When he meets me he fastens on to me ; we spend whole evenings sitting together and he never leaves me. The reason is quite simple. He knows very few people in society, which consists mostly of members of the other camp and of women who, like my friend, do not know him well enough to find him amusing. I, personally, am more civil and welcome him. It is strange how timid he is in society, as if he were just beginning. But with me it is not merely politeness ; I find him thoroughly entertaining, and I owe it to you. You gave me a taste for his conversation. His phrases are always unexpected. Yesterday, he was speaking to me about England's attitude to Austria and said : "We regard her as the pivot of Europe, and our shoulder is always ready to support her. We are like a lover whom she will always find waiting for her ; and we like her to help her other lover, Russia, who is perhaps not always so faithful, but who must be treated all the better for that very reason."

April 2.

M. de Chateaubriand arrives tomorrow. The attachés have taken it into their heads to advertise him as a romantic hero ; and, yesterday, at a big diplomatic dinner, M. de Marcellus told us that one Duchess had died of love for him, that another had gone off her head, and that a third had fractured her thigh. The whole table burst out laughing. The speaker was filled with righteous indignation that anyone could laugh about a thigh fractured in honour of the author of *Les Martyrs*. However, he tried to wipe out the accident by assuring us that his heart is of ice. The thought of the broken thigh will be too much for my gravity when I meet him. . . .

April 1822]

LADY STEWART'S BEDROOM

The 11th.

How you would have laughed yesterday, if you had gone with me to call on Lady Stewart. She showed me her bedroom, which is the most important room in the house. Above the bed is a baron's coronet, the size of the crown of the King of Würtemberg on the palace at Stuttgart—red velvet, ermine, everything that goes with it. From it hang heavy draperies, held up at the four corners of the bed by four large gilt figures of Hercules, nude and fashioned exactly like real men. The bed is as big as a room and almost on the level of the ground. While she was showing it me, she laughed at least forty times, with that noisy laugh of hers, stopping and starting all over again every few seconds. What an extraordinary family ! I should lose my taste for luxury in that house : it is displayed in such a vulgar way.

London, April 27.

I am working on Lady Conyngham as hard as I can to support the journey ; things are going well in that quarter, and now it all depends on Lord Londonderry. He told me that, in a very few days, he would know definitely how long the present session of Parliament is likely to last ; and that will be the deciding factor. I was to take Lady Conyngham to Lady Londonderry's yesterday. I had promised to bring her, and there was great joy at the thought that this wretched quarrel was over ; but she gave me the slip, and I am furious. She is the most changeable person in the world. She always listens to the last-comer ; and, as her promise to me dated from the previous day, doubtless she was given some advice more charitable than mine. Some people are always sorry to see a squabble finished.

The King is bored to death ; he sees nobody ; the favourite does not go near him. She is having an attack of prudish-

ness ; but it will pass, I fancy. In the interval, he asks me to go. I advised him to invite people to see him, or to show himself in public ; his courage is not sufficient to do either.

London, the 29th.

I do not care for M. de Chateaubriand.¹ Here is one of his affectations, and he has thousands : he complains of being bored in society. I told him that he ought to try to make acquaintances, and that I should be delighted to introduce him to some clever women whose conversation would be certain to give him pleasure. "Ah, Madame, I do not like clever women." "You prefer stupid ones ?" "Very much." "In that case I am surprised that you are bored, for you have much more chance of finding what you need." I suppose he thinks I am stupid, for he speaks to nobody but me, but even to me he speaks extremely little. So that is as far as he has got in the matter of recreation. Lord Liverpool does not like him at all. Lord Londonderry finds that he expresses himself well, but that he has no understanding of affairs. Lord Harrowby exchanges grand speeches with him. My friend begged me let her off making his acquaintance ; after what he said, that goes without saying.

The 8th.

M. de Chateaubriand is exceedingly unpopular here. He is rude, disagreeable, and affects to treat the English as if they were dirt. He seizes on little things and ignores important. He displays a complete lack of taste and courtesy. His acquaintances say it is because no one has fallen in love with him. He goes about with a sentimental, dreamy air and a

¹ In a previous letter, dated the eleventh, Madame de Lieven notes that she has encountered Chateaubriand and that he affects an intense expression and reminds her of "a hunchback without the hump."

heart for sale—but nobody wants it. He told me yesterday, at dinner, that the greatest joy, when one was in love, was, together with one's beloved, to breathe the atmosphere of some old-fashioned drawing-room; and that a whole life spent in that way would be a life of happiness. I looked at him as he spoke and felt he was right in his conception of happiness; for nobody would feel inclined to offer him happiness of any other sort. Can you bear sentimental phrases when they are uttered by a person to whom you are entirely indifferent? They set my teeth on edge, like wrong notes in music. I find it so difficult to recognise here any signs of intelligence. M. de Chateaubriand certainly has intelligence; but I think it is distorted, like his figure.

Richmond, same day.

Here I am surrounded by lilac, nightingales, flowering chestnut-trees; and I feel that I have been very stupid not to have come to enjoy all this before today. What a delicious spot! The loveliest in all this lovely England. Today, we have our great ball in London: how much better off I am here than I shall be there!

Yesterday, a tragic thing happened. The Primate of Ireland had not been well the previous day; and the doctor had sent him some medicine to take before going to bed. His wife mistook the bottle and gave him two spoonfuls of laudanum—English ladies always keep a regular chemist's shop in their dressing-rooms. She realised her mistake the moment he swallowed it. All remedies were in vain; he died in an hour. Can you imagine a more tragic situation than his poor wife's!

I see that news of Lady Ranelle's¹ adventure has reached

¹ Students of Byron's letters will remember Lady Ranelle as the hostess who invited him to supper and then put him off with a "damned anchovy sandwich."

your ears. I know M. de Mossion, the hero of this diverting episode. He was here two years ago. He was introduced to Lady Grantham and, after bowing to her, turned round and remarked out loud : "Quite pretty for her age." That was enough to condemn him in London. Nobody is very sorry for Lady Rancilffe's fate ; she is such a worthless person. Did you hear that . . . she complained to everyone that Madame d'Oudenarde had recommended her the house where she was caught as being perfectly safe : Nice for the author of the recommendation.

London, the 12th.

I returned to London yesterday, escorted by fashionables of both sexes, who had come to visit us at Richmond on Friday. The last day was marvellous ; we spent it on the Thames. A boat is a sure means of sending me to sleep. You can be so lazy in it. Your mind is lulled to sleep ; it feels but does not think. I can't be angry ; I can't argue ; I can't dislike anything or anybody. It was fantastic the number of times I said "Yes" during the excursion ; and, finally, I fell fast asleep. So we are going back to Richmond next week—my friend, Lady Cowper, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Gower, Clanwilliam and a few other men ; the right company for day-dreaming and resting.

After this, I plunged straight into a large dinner at Lord Liverpool's ; everyone seemed in a bad temper. The host pointed to Peel and said : "There is a man who will be Prime Minister before ten years are out" ; and he was as pleased as if it were not his own post he would have to give up. His pleasure is typically English and does him credit. I do not think Londonderry looks on this rival with quite so much satisfaction.

May 1822]

DRURY LANE

The 16th.

Yesterday, I went to see the King attend a performance at Drury Lane. We took the Duke of Wellington. The moment he appeared, he was cheered to the echo. At first, he did not want to take any notice ; when he was compelled to go forward to satisfy the audience, he gave two little nods, as if to say, "How do you do," and then left them to clap their hands sore without giving them another look. The King entered five minutes later. He spent a good quarter of an hour bowing to the audience, as politely and respectfully as if it had been composed of kings and queens. The contrast was striking. However, he could not have been received with greater enthusiasm. We had to put up with "God Save the King" no less than six times.

Monday, May 20.

Lord Stewart's child was christened yesterday with a great deal of vulgar ostentation. I was there ; it took nearly the whole day. The famous bed, surmounted by a coronet and supported by gilt figures of Hercules, with back-cloth and lamp hanging from the canopy, was transformed into an altar before dinner and a sideboard after, and back into a bed at the end of the festivities. The whole town came to see the farce. . . .

Tuesday, the 21st.

Yesterday, there was a scene between the King and Lady Conyngham that is worth relating. The King is to give a large dinner-party for the Prince and Princess of Denmark. When he was making out the list, he included Lord and Lady Londonderry. Lady Conyngham declared that if the latter was at dinner, she would not come. The King, on his

side, declared that, if she did not come, he would not give a dinner for the Princess. Lady Conyngham persisted. Finally, he agreed to invite neither Lord nor Lady Londonderry ; but, at the end of the argument, he persuaded Lady Conyngham to see me and ask me to arbitrate between them. She came to tell me what had happened. I summoned all my eloquence ; I pointed out to her that an official dinner, given by the King to a foreign Prince and to the Ambassadors, from which the Minister for Foreign Affairs was excluded, would be in the worst possible taste ; that not to invite Lady Londonderry would be to offer a personal insult to her husband ; that the advances she had been making for a year to Lady Conyngham were enough to atone for her past rudeness ; that, moreover, she owed it to the King not to make difficulties with his Minister. I added that, finally, all the credit would be hers, and begged her as a favour to promise to let him have the Londonderrys. She told me to make out the list for the dinner, since the King had promised to invite only the guests whom she should name. I put down at the top of the list Lord and Lady Londonderry ; she would not promise anything. I refused to let her go. It was a long battle, but I won, and now, thank Heaven, a quarrel of two years' standing is ended, at any rate as far as appearances go. I can think of no more difficult job than getting round a woman's vanity, when one can appeal neither to her reason nor to her decent feelings.

Richmond, the 26th.

We came here yesterday—the Duke of Wellington, the Cowpers, Clanwilliam and a few others. The weather is wet and cold, which is very annoying. One sole object in coming was to spend a few days in the open air ; instead of which, here we are shut indoors with huge fires, all crowded

June 1822]

IN THE COUNTRY

together in a drawing-room. Up to now, our disappointment has produced nothing but good humour ; yet, if it goes on, it will evoke other feelings. On these occasions, nobody is more amusing than our friend Wellington. He cannot understand things being other than he wishes : that it should rain when he is counting on good weather, or that I should not want to accompany him when he is setting out for a walk.

Tuesday, the 28th.

The fine weather has come back, and, with it, visitors from London ; and, with the visitors, parties on the river, and all the idle occupations of country life, which result in one's never having a moment to oneself. Lady Conyngham came, too, to spend a day with us. She is everywhere she fancies it is good form to be seen ; and, as she does me the honour to imagine that I am a high authority, she sticks close to me. We spent our day on the river. The banks of the Thames are enchanting ; one never gets tired of them.

London, June 2, 1822.

I have . . . an attack of spleen. Everything round me encourages it ; there is so little intelligence and good sense anywhere. This judgement is aimed for the moment at Lord Londonderry ; and I am surprised to have to apply it to him. I had a long talk with him. After dragging out of me an explanation of the dinner, which I gave him with all possible reservations as to the part I had played—see my last letter, on the subject of a dinner for the Princess of Denmark—he suddenly flew into a positive rage. “You have shown me my position, our position, clearly. Things cannot go on like this. We cannot put up with a Lady Conyngham

who is powerful enough to offer us such affronts." This outburst seemed to me singularly ill-judged. I pointed out to him gently that Lady Conyngham could not be opposed ; that, consequently, one must put up with the inconvenience, which, after all, was not serious, since he attached no value to an invitation more or less, and surely would not sacrifice important interests for the sake of a story. I explained that, in telling it, I was giving him a personal proof of my trust in him ; that nobody else knew ; and that, in fact, he and his wife had been to the dinner, and had thus received their due. He replied : "From now on, I shall be nothing more than His Majesty's very humble servant—we shall see how long these relations will last. If they do not last, I shall resign. I have done enough for my country and my master to be independent in that respect ; and nothing can stop me." I could only reiterate my surprise that he should be prepared to sacrifice to a women's quarrel his entire political existence and the good he has done and might yet do. "In any case," he said, "I cannot sacrifice my honour and my pride ; both are more wounded than I can say. I repeat, things cannot remain as they are. As for the journey, I wash my hands of it. The King has Liverpool ; let him arrange with him. I shall accept his orders ; and, if I continue to serve him, I shall decide, according to whether my wife is or is not included in the expedition, what course I have to take."

Here our conversation was broken off. A few hours later, he sent his brother to tell me that his mind was absolutely made up. I spoke a little more openly to his brother about the singular frame of mind in which I had left Lord Londonderry. "Londonderry," he said, "is disgusted with everything. One more reason for disgust—this women's quarrel—and the cup has overflowed. The other reasons are the new rival put up against him in the House of Commons, and the mistrust that he feels of all his colleagues." I expressed

the greatest astonishment at the last suggestion, and urged him to explain. "Yes," he said, "he has enemies among them, and he knows it ; but he does not know which they are, and thus suspects them all. Wellington, for instance ; what do his relations with the King mean ?" Here I rejoined with some heat : "Why does he not suspect me too ? I am more friendly than Wellington with the King and Lady Conyngham—does that make Londonderry mistrust me ? Ought you not to be thankful that the Duke and I are in the royal circle : that you have people near her whom you know are friends, and who will prevent his enemies from occupying the same position ? I am as sure of the Duke as I am of myself ; he is incapable of dishonesty. And what good would it do him to harm your brother ?" Lord Stewart burst into tears. He told me that Lord Londonderry was broken-hearted, and that he had never seen a man in such a state. He begged me to try and get an open declaration of hostility from Lady Conyngham, rather than leave things as they are.

Windsor, June 6.

I have been here for three days. I have not had a moment to give you, because, except at seven in the morning and while I am dressing, I am always with the King. But, if I have not written, I have acted ; and I have done more in these three days than in the last eight months. I have worked on the family to such an extent that they want not only Vienna, but also Florence ; and, unless there is open opposition from the Ministers—opposition which might bring about a quarrel—it will come off. I said everything I could to the King to flatter his pride, his love of pleasure and his small vanities. The Florence plan was new to him ; he swallowed it at once. If I have made a blunder, you have no right to

be angry. Here are his last words and the two plans for the journey, Vienna, and Florence afterwards, if we leave at the end of July. Florence only, if it is not till August, and, in any case, Paris. We spent two mornings arranging this, the King, Lady Conyngham and I. It was really extremely funny. They thought Florence was twice as far from here as Vienna. They did not know which way one went ; so I began by teaching them geography. The favourite is dying to be seen in the company which will be assembled in Florence. The King would rather remain where he is ; but he will not hold out against the wishes of Lady Conyngham. I made a grand speech, full of the dangers of Jacobinism and the great moral effect which the presence of the King of England at a congress would produce in Europe. I dragged in my Emperor, and said how much he would value a chance to wipe out memories of the year 1814. In short, I tried to remember all his vulnerable points ; and really we have never been so near achieving our end. ♣

London, the (?).

I came back here this evening. When I left the King, his last words were of the expedition and his promise to make arrangements with Liverpool and Londonderry next Tuesday, the day of his return to town. However, he urged me to keep his new plan a secret. When I got out of my carriage, I found Lord Stewart, whom Londonderry had sent to find out from me what had been said and done. I did not boast of my success, because I begin to suspect, that, though certain people may need my help in that quarter, they are a little offended at the influence I exercise. That is very small-minded ; since I always use it in Lord Londonderry's interests, show him every kind of confidence and friendship, and, in this respect, confide in nobody else, he should forget my

official position and remember that I am his friend. However that may be, I see that even friendship must have its limits, and I shall keep to them. So I said merely that we had talked about the expedition and that they were counting on Londonderry to go. Here Lord Stewart disclosed to me his brother's suspicions. All his jealousy is directed against the Duke of Wellington. He thinks that Wellington plans to supplant him, that he wants to go on the journey, and that my intimacy with him, and the intimacy he has achieved through me with the King, are directed to this end. "Now," he went on, "if Wellington moves up a step, my brother will resign, for he will never suffer this rival, or indeed any rival. These fancies seem to him all the more real in view of the enmity that exists between the two women, and the general unwillingness to let Lady Londonderry go on the journey." I shall not deceive them on this point. Certainly, they do not want her to go. But to suppose that, for such a motive, they would get rid of Londonderry; that Wellington would intrigue to advance himself; that anyone would think of him in such a connection—in short, that there is a word of truth in the whole story—is absurd. I gave twenty different proofs that it was quite the contrary; that Wellington was not at all popular; and that he was only invited as a member of the society in which I move. Unless he spends the night with Lady Conyngham, he never sees her alone at her country parties. There has not been a single private talk between him and the family; and, on two occasions when he entered the room, while we were discussing the expedition, she frowned and very soon sent him away again. To tell the truth, I am astonished at all this intrigue, at the illusory terrors that have been conjured up, and I foresee that nothing good will come of it; every day the situation becomes more complicated. I should give it more thought and write to you more explicitly if I could think and speak of anything but the journey.

What extraordinary things have I seen and heard during these last few days ! I should have to write volumes to do them justice ; I can give you nothing but a very bald summary. However, here is one of the scenes between the trio—King, Favourite and Myself :

The King, pointing to Lady Conyngham : “Ah, heavens, if she were what I am !” I was at a loss to understand what this meant. Ought Lady Conyngham to be a man ? The King stopped, sighed, and then went on : “If she were a widow, as I am a widower, she would not be one for long.”

Lady Conyngham : “Ah, my dear King, how good you are. (What do you think of the delicacy of the proposal and of its reception ?) The King : “Yes, I have taken an oath” ; then, turning to me, he added in a low voice, “Patience; everything in good time.”

I could not help thinking of the mysterious nocturnal visits of the man-midwife, and a whole chemist’s shop flashed through my mind. I am not sure that I did not shiver as if I were cold. What do you think of this fragment of conversation ? Let me return to the journey. One must admit that, if it comes off, as it now seems it may, it will be in spite of everyone. When I think where I started, I am amazed at the distance I have covered. I fancy there are people who would poison me, even without wanting to marry my husband, if they knew the part I have played.

The 10th.

Londonderry looks ghastly. He has aged five years in the last week ; one can see that he is a broken man. I am afraid that Lord Stewart may be doing him a bad turn, and that his suspicions may have taken root in his brother’s mind. Now that I know what those suspicions are, a number of circumstances come to mind that confirm me in my belief that

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THE KING'S JOURNEY

he mistrusts the Duke of Wellington. For instance, he does not like M. de Lieven to talk business with the latter, and sometimes has been touchy about it. The Duke is easier to deal with, more open, more frank, readier to be persuaded, because he has no responsibility. Londonderry thinks that he might suit us better, or that we think so ; and, seeing him so intimate with me, he has got it into his head that we might like Wellington in his place : hence my efforts to get him admitted to the King's favour. All this has its plausible side ; and, if one were distrustful to start with, one might credit it ; however, you know that it lacks foundation. Politically, I should be exchanging one evil for another. In any case, I make a great distinction between the two of them, even in the matter of confidence. In certain things, I place a hundred times more in Lord Londonderry than in the Duke. Why on earth has Londonderry contracted these suspicions ? It seems to me that I have an honest face. Why cannot he see what is in my heart ? Well, I shall leave him to calm down a little ; he will soon come to his senses.

The 17th.

I am a woman, and very much of a woman. I want things passionately and I believe them readily. I think I have brought it off. I had a long talk yesterday with Lady Conyngham. I made her quite excited about the prestige that she could acquire for the King in Europe by definitely deciding him on the journey. I spoke to her in guarded terms of the necessity of the English Foreign Minister being present at the Congress, and of the difficulty of getting him there without the excuse of the King's journey. She swallowed everything I said : I knew that, two hours later, the King was to see Lord Londonderry and speak to him for the first time of his plans ; it was in my interest, therefore, that he should be prepared to back

them up at the interview. I went to dine with Lord Londonderry full of hope and fear ; I was certain I should be able to read the result on his face. He was radiant, and I began to brighten.

At table, I waited for him to speak ; he enjoyed teasing me. I spoke to him about you and gave him your message in a few words. He answered that he had received a long and friendly letter ; I insisted on a reply. After failing a score of times, which did not discourage me, I elicited this : "Tell him that I am hoping to see him soon." Indeed, it was not a suitable moment for long explanations. The occasion was a very stiff dinner in honour of the Princess of Denmark ; nobody talked, and my neighbour was rather deaf. After dinner, Lord Stewart came up to me and said : "I congratulate you ; you must be proud of yourself ; you have made the King obey you on every point. My brother found him as prepared as if he were under orders ; everything you wish is done, and we must all run at your bidding." He looked nettled ; and I replied shortly that I did not care for mystifications. Later, Count Münster came and paid me much the same compliment, and with as ill a grace ; for he has done everything he can to prevent the journey. I silenced him in the same negative way. I am not much worried by these petty displays of malice ; I am only annoyed that Londonderry should vacillate between his former confidence in me and his new-found suspicions of the Duke of Wellington ; but that will pass. I think of nothing but our splendidly successful project—for so it strikes me. I shall not see the King today ; but I shall hear all about his conversation with his Minister tomorrow or the day after. Today I have to go into the country.

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THE KING IS GLOOMY

London, the 21st.

I did not want to add anything to this letter, but it seems to me in your interests that I should continue my diary ; and, for this purpose, that I should go on from the day before yesterday. I arrived at Lady Conyngham's. She was holding a letter from the King. Her face was tear-stained, her eyes swollen : "All is over," she said ; "he writes to me this morning that his plans have been changed, that he is going, not to the Continent, but to Scotland, and he has just sent for his Ministers to tell them his wishes." "In Heaven's name," I said, "don't let him make any irrevocable decision. Write to him at once. Tell him to wait till he has seen you. . . ." At this moment, in comes the Marchioness's son. She asked him what the King was doing. "He is with his Ministers." That finished it. When he left the Palace, Londonderry received my husband and told him officially that the King had given up the idea of his journey on the Continent, that he was going to Scotland, and that couriers had just been despatched to give notice of his arrival at Edinburgh.

June 22.

Yesterday, I saw a few people from Court. The King is gloomy ; the favourite is gloomy ; everybody is gloomy. They do not know what to do with their summer ; they all look as if they were on the point of committing suicide. We have taken up the subject again. Esterhazy is now openly admitted to have been the cause of things going wrong ; and, what is worse, he will not even express conventional regret on behalf of his Court. Anyhow, it is quite in keeping with his general behaviour. How could he hand out apologies to people to whom he has said such stupid things ? His relations here are bound to get worse ; the King no longer looks at him—every day, he regrets his lost journey more

and more, and thus every day his anger increases. The favourite told me yesterday that the only people who are pleased are Stewart, the man-midwife and Esterhazy ; all the others are wretched.

June 24.

At a large luncheon party the other day, Madame Esterhazy entered to regale a group of twenty people with the story of what she had just seen in the shrubbery—to wit, Lady Harrowby and Mr. Montagu busy doing what Madame Esterhazy does very often herself. Everyone cried shame ; she insisted that she had seen it and went into full details. The news spread like lightning. Everybody is indignant ; Lady Harrowby's large family demands vengeance for this stupid lie ; and my friend, who is her sister-in-law, has sworn to insult the liar in public before she leaves. The story is so ridiculous that no one but a child or a fool could believe it. Imagine a woman of fifty, who receives Mr. Montagu every day and has been receiving him for twenty years, choosing a large luncheon party, with a whole host of people there, to do such a thing ! All the same, scandalous tongues have been set wagging over Lady Harrowby's name. My friend is beside herself. I spent an hour trying to calm her, but to no purpose. Then I sent for Neumann, told him the story, and begged him to arrange that Madame Esterhazy should leave at once, since it will be very difficult for me to prevent an open rupture. Till she goes, I will try to retard the outbreak—in fact, I will do all I can to avoid a public scandal.

Yesterday, I dined with Lady Cowper, who, as you know, belongs to the Opposition. The favourite was there, and they had asked Lord Grey in the hope of bringing him into closer relations with her. These meetings take place only in the house of a third party and are extremely rare. They

always leave behind them a long trail of renewed amiabilities towards the Opposition, and consequently of hatred for the Government. Yesterday, I was also afraid that I should have to listen to expressions of satisfaction that the journey had been given up. So I laid my plan, which was not to let them speak to one another. Lord Grey is always very attentive to me. Yesterday, I was more gracious to him. I made him sit by me at table ; and, towards the end of dessert, he was quite ready to believe I was encouraging him. When we went up to the drawing-room, he came to sit by me again, and did not leave me till he went. So I prevented all secret talks between him and the Marchioness ; but I could not prevent a frightful indiscretion on her part. Suddenly, in a clearly audible voice, she asked Clanwilliam : when Londonderry was going to the Congress ? "I have heard nothing about it ; but certainly they say he is going." At once Lord Grey pricked up his ears : "What ? Londonderry ? What Congress ? Is there to be a Congress ?" Lady Conyngham : "But, of course." "*If there is a Congress, there is mischief ; send me to the Congress ; I shall know what to do there.*" "*What would you do ?*" "*Break it up immediately, and send the Holy Alliance to the devil.*" Here's a nice mess ; I am sure that in a few days there will be questions and criticism in Parliament, and the last hope of seeing Londonderry go will disappear. What a wretched nuisance !

The 25th.

M. de Chateaubriand gave a large ball yesterday for his house-warming. He tried by all the clumsiest means possible to get the King to come, but he did not succeed ; and, to make up, he filled his house with most oddly assorted company. Good society was lost in a sea of strangers ; and the crowd and the heat were so great that many people felt

ill. The Duke of Wellington and I seized my friend and each took her by an arm to prevent her creating a scandal. The sight of Madame Esterhazy made her blood boil. I do not know what she did after I left ; but Wellington promised me to keep an eye on her. The King is just as furious with Madame Esterhazy for behaving in such a despicable way ; he would not look at her the other evening, and called Lady Harrowby to come and sit by him—everyone thought that was in very good taste. The best thing your Ambassadors can do is to pack up as soon as may be. That, I am afraid, is the only solution.

(Date uncertain.)

My friend sent a crushing letter to Madame Esterhazy, with the result that the latter wrote with her own hand a formal recantation of her scandalous story. She swore that she saw nothing and said nothing. Two hours after writing this document, she left for the Continent, and that is the end of the affair. I went to see her before she left ; she complained to me of the slanders that had been spread about her and of my coldness towards her recently. I told her frankly that, after hearing how she had tried to make mischief about me at Court, I had naturally stopped showing her any kindnesses, which in any case she had never seemed to appreciate, and that for the rest, as I did not feel that anything she might say about me would do me any harm, I had never avenged myself except by not mentioning her name.

Tuesday, July 2.

Society is all affairs of gallantry—there is a positive epidemic of them—and yesterday a clandestine marriage took place under the most extraordinary auspices. What strange beings these Englishwomen are ! Think of it, a little miss running

away at nine in the morning from her parents' house, arriving at the church door, seizing two passers-by in the street and forcing them to be witnesses of the ceremony ! The young man for his part had hired a parson and caught a passer-by too. They were married and left at once, meaning to cross to France. When they got to Rochester, they realised that they had not a halfpenny ; and there they are stuck, living presumably on love, for they have nothing else. The girl is own niece to the Duke of Wellington, and the young man is the Marquis of Worcester, future Duke of Beaufort. He lost his wife a year ago ; it is his wife's sister he has just married. The canons of the Church do not allow this, so that his present wife must be regarded from now on as his mistress. The whole town is talking about the incident. The young woman's beauty consists in large black eyebrows and a great deal of hair on her face and arms—Englishmen cannot resist hairy arms. Isn't that an odd taste ?

The 3rd.

Another storm has broken over our heads ; I bow mine and keep quiet. Lord Liverpool has pulled so many strings, and frightened the King so much by means of newspaper articles, that he has made him take up again the plan of a Scottish tour. The King is in tears ; the favourite is in tears ; they are all in despair. All I have said is that, if I were King, nobody should have the right to make me cry. I give as much autocratic advice as I can ; but I have to deal with two women—the King and his mistress. You can see what a weathercock he is ; the last person to speak to him carries the day.

It is a long time since I had any news from my friend on the Continent, or since she had any from me. I find it difficult to write to her about M. de Chateaubriand, of whom,

nevertheless, she wishes to hear. He is the least interesting and the least sentimental of men. He is keeping Madame Lafont, and she does the honours of his house. He goes nowhere but to her ; in fact, he is all ill-breeding laced with fine sentiments. He spends his evenings with her and talks for three hours on end about glory, enthusiasm and, I fancy, also about virtue. I can forgive him his mistress ; but I cannot forgive a clever man for wasting enthusiasm, glory and virtue on such an audience. A clever man who does that must be a fool.

Richmond, the 15th.

I came here yesterday in company ; I shall not go back to London till tomorrow. This morning, Lady Conyngham's son came to tell me that the trip to Scotland had that very moment been decided on. That is just to annoy everybody. I could not possibly answer for the arrival of your Emperor's letter. What could I do ? I see that one can contract all kinds of habits, even the habit of bad luck. The news made no impression on me. The King's household is really the most extraordinary thing in the world. He is head over heels in love ; yet his doctor's¹ influence rules him in the first place, and dominates his affections, tastes, everything. The doctor's chief exploit is having poisoned his wife twenty years ago, and the chief cause of his intimate relations with the King is having seized all his papers at the death of the King's confidential secretary MacMahon. . . . He made threats, and fear gave birth to love.

The news from Spain is remarkable. If King Ferdinand were not an idiot, he would wipe out the revolution with a word and a gesture. But he can be relied on to be sure to keep it going. What fools kings are today ! Forgive me

¹ Knighton, otherwise the "man-midwife."

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RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA

for this outburst : but sometimes I feel that I must speak or suffocate.

August 1.

I saw Lord Londonderry again yesterday. The main work in the House of Commons was just finished, and he was in good spirits. He is delighted, too, that he is going to see you. I read your instructions to your Ambassador in Paris concerning affairs in Spain, I thought them very good and very clear. Since Esterhazy left, our relations with Austria have once more become what they ought to be, considering the friendship between our Cabinets. Neumann has everything read to M. de Lieven. Latterly, Esterhazy not only showed nothing to M. de Lieven, but even rejected his proposals to communicate to him the despatches from St. Petersburg. You will admit that that is an odd way of performing one's duty. As for his social behaviour, I need not tell you that he left without so much as calling on us ; that is quite consistent.

The 5th.

Today, I am going to Woolwich to see a fortress stormed. The Duke of Wellington is holding scientific manœuvres for the Duke of York. Congreve is to entertain us with his rockets too ; and I shall come home very well informed. I should like to be a little better informed about my future ; I hate this uncertainty.

Tuesday, the 6th.

I spent twelve solid hours at Woolwich, from noon till midnight. I took a complete course in practical gunnery. I loathe the noise of cannon, but I had to put up with it standing at the very mouth of one of the wretched things. I

watched the assault ; I watched the cannons crossing the river like ducks ; I had a miserable lunch in the company of three hundred people ; I watched a ball and, after that, fireworks. Later, I went for a walk in the illuminated shrubberies—and all the time on the arm of the Duke of York. I forgot to mention the review of two regiments. I felt out of place ; I have not at all a military mind, and my cavalier did not succeed in explaining anything. Heavens, how he bored me the whole day ! What an excellent way of learning to dislike someone, to be compelled to spend twelve hours side by side !

Thursday, the 8th.

Bloomfield¹ has been appointed to Stockholm. The man-midwife has been given the post of Keeper of the Privy Purse ; it will increase his salary but not his influence or his intimacy with his master, for both are already as great as they can be. The man-midwife is a clever person ; I heard only quite lately that he is the editor of *John Bull*. It is an exceedingly witty paper ; but, if the author were known, he would be knocked on the head. He plans very soon to rule the rulers, is trying to reduce the Ministers to subjection, and flatters the King with ideas of absolutism. Lady Conyngham trembles and dare not oppose him ; she hates the man-midwife. What a nice household !

Friday, the 9th.

I met Sir George Cockburn yesterday at dinner at Mr. Canning's house. I had not met him since his return from

¹ Lieut.-General Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, the King's Private Secretary and confidential agent, second only in influence to his Physician, Sir William Knighton, who, owing to his early and somewhat discreditable connection with Lord Wellesley's mistress, was nicknamed by Madame de Lieven the "man-midwife."

St. Helena ; now he is a Lord of the Admiralty. I asked him what he thought of O'Meara¹ He said that he was vulgar but not a bad fellow, and that, in all his accounts of conversations with Bonaparte, he recognised exactly the same opinions as the latter had expressed to him on similar topics. Then I asked him what he thought of Bonaparte. He said that he had once looked on him as the most remarkable of men ; but, after a year of regular and intimate dealings with him, he had ended by being astonished that so small a man could have accomplished such great things

M. de Chateaubriand tries hard to make up to me ; I do not feel that it gives him much pleasure, and I am sure that it gives me none. His mind is not the type I like, and he freezes me I am amazed by his vanity and his affectation. He is not liked here, and everyone seems to have passed round the word to make fun of him.

The 12th.

Ah, what a frightful tragedy—I am shaking from head to foot—Londonderry ! What an end ! You will hear the news—accompanied by what details I do not know. I am writing this in odd moments. Here is the information I have just gathered from Lady Conyngham. Last Friday, the 9th, Londonderry went to see the King at Carlton House. He came from North Cray with his wife, and she put him down at the door of the Palace. When he got into the King's study, he seized him by the arm and said : "Have you heard the news, the terrible news ? I am a fugitive from justice, I am accused of the same crime as the Bishop of Clogher. I have ordered my saddle horses ; I am going to fly to Portsmouth, and from there to the ends of the earth." The King took him by both hands and begged him to com-

¹ Author of *A Voice from St. Helena*.

pose himself, to be calm. They were alone. Londonderry began again ; he accused himself of every crime, he threatened the King, and then kissed his hands and wept ; for half an hour, he alternated between madness and repentance. Finally, the King succeeded in getting him out of the house and sent for help. The surgeon arrived at his town house and persuaded him to go back to the country at once. Before going, he saw my husband, whom he had invited to a conference, and kept him three-quarters of an hour without telling him any news or asking him for any. He talked of his journey, of his health, and said that he felt very depressed ; he spoke a great deal of me, and invited me to go and dine with him today at his country house, so that we could have a long talk together ; and, finally, he took his departure. When he reached North Cray, he asked his wife for the key of the box where he kept his pistols. She refused to give it him. The doctor arrived, ordered cupping glasses to be put on his head and sent him to bed. He sweated a great deal but he was not delirious ; his pulse was fairly steady all the time. He stayed in his room on Saturday and Sunday. He saw nobody but his wife and the doctor. He had her read a novel to him, and three or four times, while she was reading, he sat up in bed and exclaimed : "That is very extraordinary." This was the only sign he gave of being distracted. On Sunday, while everyone was at church, he remained alone with his doctor and talked a great deal about public opinion. He asked what people thought of him, and whether they accused him of any crimes. The doctor begged him to be calm and not to talk of such things, as they excited him. Londonderry said that he could not go to the Continent so long as he allowed the suspicion of a crime to rest on him. Presently, he grew calmer. He went to bed as usual with his wife. During the night, he retired to his dressing-room to wash his face, and, an hour later, to clean

his teeth. Afterwards, he went to bed again. At seven in the morning, the doctor knocked at the door. The maid, who had already gone in to her mistress, called to him not to open it as my Lady was getting up. Five minutes later, he returned ; the lady's maid opened the door and told him that my Lord had just entered his dressing-room. The doctor went in after him, and found him standing up, his eyes fixed. He cried, "*Let me fall in your arms, it is all over.*" The doctor ran to him ; at that moment, streams of blood gushed from an artery in the neck, directly connected with the heart. In his right hand, he was holding a little pen-knife which he used to cut his nails ; he fell stone dead.

Wednesday, the 13th.

Lady Conyngham wanted to speak to me the day before yesterday. She was ill, and I was unable to visit her. She wanted to tell me, in confidence, that Lord Londonderry was mad, so that I might warn my husband secretly that he could not go to the Continent. Yesterday, I went to see her knowing nothing ; for nobody, except the King and Lord Liverpool, suspected Londonderry's condition. When I entered I congratulated her, for it was the King's birthday ; and, at that very moment, her elder son came in pale as death and said : "Londonderry is dead." Lady Conyngham clutched her head in her hands and cried : "Good God, he has killed himself." Her son seized her by the arm, thinking she was going crazy : "But no, Mother, he had an apoplectic fit." She repeated : "He has killed himself ; he was mad." I cannot describe to you what I felt. For some little time, I could not speak. I heard only confusedly the story of what had happened up to Saturday, the day the King left. He had made her swear not to tell anyone the secret of Londonderry's madness ; now she blames herself for having kept her

promise and for not having told some of the people intimately connected with Londonderry. Heavens, to think of leaving him alone for a second ! You remember all I told you six weeks or two months ago. I remember Stewart's despair ; he said to me once : "It will end in disaster." I never supposed that the phrase referred to anything but a political event, and I imagined that Londonderry would suddenly resign. I was far from anticipating such a disaster. I take up my pen ; I put it down—my mind is not calm enough to allow me to write to you connectedly. You remember the scene he made about the King's dinner, and my surprise that he should feel so strongly. No-one noticed anything strange in his behaviour ; I might have noticed something, but I always put it down to the imaginary terrors he created for himself, or let others create for him. How should the idea that he might go mad ever enter my head ? At times, I think he was mad. Terrible remorse was preying on his conscience. But he was not mad when he killed himself. Nobody can quote a word he said that was not sane. There is no evidence except his conversation with the King.

M. de Lieven went to see Lord Liverpool this morning ; he found him quite overwhelmed. It was the King who told him, on Saturday, the 10th, what he had noticed about Lord Londonderry's condition. He wrote to Londonderry, who had already gone back to North Cray. They say he was calmer after receiving that letter. Liverpool had not seen him since the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, the 7th. That day, he laid before his colleagues the instructions he had drawn up for himself, dealing with the matters to be discussed at Verona. He expounded them with all his usual wisdom and clarity of mind. Neither Liverpool nor anyone else noticed any trace of insanity. My husband represented to Liverpool that the occasion was urgent. "The man is dead ; but the reasons which necessitated his presence at

Verona are still there. Will someone be sent, and who ?” Lord Liverpool replied that Londonderry’s death had left affairs in the greatest confusion ; that my husband must be sufficiently well acquainted with the person concerned, and with the state of the kingdom, to realise that this tragedy had shaken the Government to its foundations ; and that, on his honour, he did not yet see who could fill the gap. The choice was equally important both for the conduct of foreign affairs and for the leadership of the House of Commons ; it must be carefully considered. The King and his Ministers were away ; without them nothing could be discussed ; he had written to the King to implore him not to consider it yet, but to wait until he was back in London. “And,” he added, “since we ourselves cannot as yet come to any decision about domestic politics, how can you expect us to think about the Congress ? The despatch of a plenipotentiary must depend on the first step—the choice of Londonderry’s successor. And that cannot be made till the King’s return.” So I fancy that for a fortnight nothing will be decided.

I am closing this letter, hoping that I may get a chance to send it you. I have nothing to add. No conjecture of mine is worth sixpence. Nobody knows anything. The Ministers are completely at a loss ; there is talk of Wellington or Canning. I don’t believe it will be either. It seems to me that Peel is the most probable. The King likes him ; he suits him ; he is a talented man.

The 14th.

I can imagine only too well how sad you must be. Besides mourning Lord Londonderry as a friend, you have to mourn him as a Minister—perhaps the only man in England who understood European politics, and whose principles as well as his inclinations urged him towards friendship with Austria.

What a loss for us all, but above all for you ! I am certain that few events can have grieved you so deeply. I cannot get over it. I see him in front of me all the time ; that noble face, so serene and so handsome ! The circumstances of his death seem to me incredible. Imagine leaving a madman alone for a second ! Why did not the doctor ask for a second opinion ? How was it that Clanwilliam and Seymour, who were always with him, noticed nothing ; or, if they did notice something, how was it that they left him ? He had nobody there but his wife, and what a wife ! It seems certain that his first attack of madness took place during his conversation with the King on Friday. They were alone together. The King did what he should ; he informed Lord Liverpool at once, though Londonderry had extracted a promise from him not to mention his suspicions, especially to his colleagues—for it appears that, during the interview with the King, he had lucid intervals when he admitted that he felt confused in his head. He said the same thing to my husband an hour later, and the same thing to M. de Werther, the Prussian Minister ; but, as his French was rather peculiar, the phrase : “*Je sens mon cerveau ébranlé,*” did not strike them. They took it that he meant he had a headache.

He showed the King two anonymous letters which he had received the day before, Thursday. One of them threatened to reveal his irregular conduct to his wife ; the other concerned a more terrible subject. This second letter sent him off his head.

The 16th.

Now that the first shock is over, speculation is rife. No event could have been better calculated to promote intrigue ; and the fact that the King is absent makes it worse, since that circumstance provides additional excuses. The Canning

faction is in high hopes. He has said that he would accept the Ministry on conditions, which means, no doubt, on condition that he can find posts for his friends. Canning has only Liverpool on his side : against him, the King, the Chancellor and everyone else. Peel is not strong enough to stand up to the Commons alone : that post will be particularly difficult to fill. My belief is that they will patch up the Ministry as best they can—which will be not at all well—and that, in the course of next Session, the Government will fall. They have sent to fetch back the Duke of Wellington from Belgium ; he is expected this evening. It is not impossible that they might give him the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ; but it would make difficulties for him in the Commons ; and it is over this that the Government will fall, unless he shows himself to be a strong man. As to sending a plenipotentiary to the Congress, that is entirely dependent on the appointment of a Minister of Foreign Affairs. Nothing can be decided before the first week in September. M. de Lieven continues to press the point. He will be seeing Lord Liverpool again today. The latter is losing his head and is getting married in a week into the bargain ; he is marrying a young lady of forty-five.

Saturday, the 17th.

The conference yesterday was more productive than my husband had hoped. He represented strongly to Lord Liverpool that it was not proper to keep the Sovereigns waiting for a plenipotentiary, and that he did not see why the despatch of an envoy could not be treated apart from the choice of a Secretary of State. Lord Liverpool held out hopes and gave him to believe that he would send the Duke of Wellington. I congratulate you on the choice and am myself very glad. He was expected tonight. I sent a line to Lamb at Frankfurt

enclosed in his sister's letter, and asked him to tell Langmann, so that he could let you know at once ; I could not trust the information to Neumann, since Lord Liverpool had made my husband promise to tell nobody here. However, it is not decided ; the King's consent is necessary ; but there is no doubt that he will give it. That appointment gives violently to think. Here we have what Londonderry feared, two months before he died, brought to pass by his death. If I could tell you everything that was said at the time between us ! But writing is such a poor resource.

Wednesday, the 20th.

As I write, our poor friend is being buried. For some days, abominable notices have been placarded everywhere urging the people not to allow the body of a suicide to defile the sanctuary of Westminster. On this subject, Cobbett has been publishing disgraceful articles, which are read with avidity by the lower classes. As a result, the mob has collected round Londonderry's town house and has been shouting the most insulting accusations. The body was brought there only tonight. Everyone was to meet at the house to join the funeral procession. That arrangement has been changed, and now they are going to wait at the Abbey itself. I am angry. It is a half-measure—a piece of cowardice—a thing one sees here only too often.

I had a long talk with the Duke of Wellington and confessed to him everything that had passed between Londonderry and myself concerning him. He finds it very natural that I should have told him nothing ; but he regrets it, because, at the time, I might have put him on the track of his illness. Heavens, how many things should have shown me that he was mad then ! But so far was I from suspecting it that I once went to the length of thinking I must be mad myself

when I remembered our conversations. He said to me one day, fixing me with haggard eyes : "Good God, can I trust you ?" The question, put so solemnly, made me indignant. I turned to him and said : "Look full in my face, what do you see there ?" He replied with a mocking look : "*A charming face, a clever face.*" I flushed scarlet. "*No, my Lord, nothing of that, but an honest face.*" He dropped his eyes and did not say a word. It was my husband who reminded me of this the other day ; for, at the time, I repeated the conversation to him. He could never understand what I told him ; but he always laid strict injunctions on me not to tell anyone in the world what Londonderry confided to me. In fact, as it concerned his chief and his colleagues, silence was my best policy.

His manner with me was extraordinary. His face lit up when he caught sight of me. I felt that he grew gentler with me, and he often told me so. Then he would allow himself to make the most intimate confidences. If I said a word to calm him about his ideas on his position—for it was always about his position that he spoke—he flew into a rage ; and, from that moment, his tone would be bitter and ironical. We usually parted on less friendly terms than when we met. That man had become a kind of torment to me. I felt attracted towards him ; at the same time, a certain terror overcame me whenever he grew angry. He was well known to possess a satirical bent ; but, in spite of that, I had a conviction that he felt real friendship towards me. He often said to me : "Heavens, if only I could see you every day !" Once, talking about his plan, when I mentioned the month of August, he replied : "In August, I shall no longer be the King's Minister." That was in one of his moments of disgust and suspicion. I deplored his irritability, without ever imagining for a moment that he was mad.

What sad memories for me ! Did I not tell you, last

December, that he asked me if you were really his friend : I remember perfectly that he addressed this question to me the day after I got back to England ; it proves that even then he had a tendency to mistrust. His conversation with Wellington on the last Friday was strange. It was as a result of it that Wellington wrote to the doctor ; and that letter, when all is said and done, is the only existing proof of Londonderry's madness. The details are too long for a letter. The upshot of the conversation was that Wellington said plainly that he was mad. Londonderry said : "Yes, I am," and burst into tears. It is agonising to think that he knew the condition he was in. Nobody noticed it, not even his most intimate friends ; and on Saturday, the day before his death, the doctor wrote to the Duke of Wellington at Brussels to tell him that Londonderry was much better and that his disorder would pass off.

Alas, you see how the tragedy affects us ! Even though my husband's request might have been granted, if Londonderry had gone to Verona, it cannot be granted now. It will not be the Minister of Foreign Affairs who will go. I see little hope, or rather I see none.

The 21st.

On his way back from the funeral yesterday, Wellington came to see me and we talked for two hours. My first question was : "Are you going to be Minister for Foreign Affairs ?"—"No, I don't want to be ; that would mean deviating from my position and my career. I should be compelled to adopt the opinions of my party and my individual opinion would no longer be free. My ideas are more independent as I am now ; I would rather stick to them. If the King's service demands that I should assume this post, I will take it, but only if the worst comes to the worst ; and I do

not think we shall come to such a pass as that. I have no ambition ; so little that I am ready to take any position, even though it is subordinate, if I see that I can be useful. Three years ago, they suggested that I should take charge in Canada : I said : 'Very well, I'll go.' Besides, I have lived too long out of England not to have lost the habit of speaking in the House ; I can't do it. If they want me, I will do it ; and I certainly can if I want to ; but, just now, I don't. In any case, they need not worry about finding Londonderry's successor. No man here is responsible for the policy of his country. That policy is already marked out, and the Cabinet cannot turn aside from it. I have already said this to Liverpool today ; and I say it again on every possible occasion. Let England abandon that policy, and you plunge Europe, and consequently yourselves, into chaos. This truth must be grasped, for it is self-evident. Listen—I have such confidence in the system that I believe that, if Lord Grey were to become Minister today, he would maintain it just as we do."

I remarked that the position of Secretary of State gave great importance in Cabinet meetings to the man who held it, and that, if his opinions were not absolutely identical with those of the Cabinet, it would be easy for him, by a thousand means at his disposition, insensibly to alter the Cabinet's policy. "Well, that is where I come in. I am in the Cabinet, and thus I believe I can do far more general good than in any other capacity." I asked him what he intended to do about a substitute. "We want to put Canning in." At this, I exclaimed : "In Heaven's name, don't have him ; that man will cheat you !" This is my private belief ; Canning has the most brilliant talents but no stability in his principles. He is excessively ambitious ; no sooner in the Ministry than he would want to create a party. To form one, he would have to put in his supporters ; bit by bit, the Ministry would

be completely revolutionised ; he might even make a compromise with the Whigs. In short, it seems to me impossible to place the least confidence in that man. He would be, in fact, the next Prime Minister ; and what power would he not then possess !

The King will do nothing before his return. He loathes Canning. Who knows what extreme course may result from the obstinate determination of Wellington and Liverpool to take Canning into the Cabinet ? The Whigs are there, and the favourite is on their side. On the other hand, Liverpool is hard-pressed by the Government adherents, who all declare that it is essential to have Canning, that Peel is neither strong nor experienced enough to lead the House, and that, unless they see, at the head of affairs, a man capable of upholding the Government in the Commons, they will withdraw their support. Peel has a great career before him, but he wants safety ; and for this reason he does nothing in a hurry and will not compromise his reputation by a doubtful attempt. He is fiery and hot-headed ; a few years' more experience of the House of Commons will prepare him better for the leadership. Just now, a moment's hastiness might ruin him. Peel is very friendly with the King, who will certainly put forward his name ; but I do not think that he will accept.

The 22nd.

The King's reply has come. He approves the choice of the Duke of Wellington for Verona, but he wants the Duke to wait until he is back from Edinburgh. Now he will not leave that city until the 28th ; and, as he can hardly reach London before September 1, Lord Liverpool reckons that, allowing for the arrangement between the King and the Duke concerning his mission to the Congress, and the Cabinet

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LORD LONDONDERRY'S ILLNESS

meetings that must be held to decide who is to take the place of Londonderry—meetings at which Wellington must, of course, be present—he will find it impossible to leave before the 6th. So it will not be until about the 18th that he can reach Verona.

Saturday, the 23rd.

Yesterday, Lord Liverpool gave me the most plausible explanation of the way Lord Londonderry was neglected. His wife had known the state he was in for a long time ; but her pride was stronger than her anxiety. She would not confide such a secret to anybody in the world. When, at last, the King's interview with Londonderry, and, afterwards, the Duke of Wellington's, made the truth clear, she continued to treat it as unimportant, in order that the journey on the Continent might not be cancelled. According to Lord Liverpool, Lady Londonderry had the journey very much at heart. She wanted it at all costs ; and, the day before the tragedy, she wrote to Liverpool that her husband was very well and that nothing would prevent his leaving on the 15th for the Continent. It was to her advantage, then, to remove him from the observation of other people ; that was why none of his intimate friends even saw him during the last days, and why she opposed with all her might the idea of the doctor calling in a colleague. As to the treatment of his patient, the doctor seems to have nothing to blame himself for. Londonderry's distraction was the result of weakness and nervous shock, not of a superabundance of blood. He was worn out. Good-bye.

The 29th. (Brighton.)

My days slip by very monotonously. I have nothing to tell you. My correspondents in London keep me informed

as to rumours, but they are all nonsense. There can be no certainty until the King returns.

What a gloomy year, and what a gloomy life I am leading ! Is this really the way I ought to use my intelligence ? I find that people stupider than I am have a hundred times more sense. Real intelligence consists in being happy, and I am not happy. Here is the summer finished, and I do not know what to do this autumn. I must find some way of distracting myself, and I see no sources of distraction in this lovely island. Meanwhile, I serve as a distraction for other people. The Duke of York plants himself on me for half the day ; the other half he spends eating. Tierney, too, comes to talk to me ; he is astonished to find the Duke of York so talkative. Although he is still an active member of the Opposition, he is far more moderate than most of his colleagues, and he is very good company. My third attaché is Lord Alvanley,¹ who is prodigiously clever, but has to be kept at a distance.

London, September 5.

I have not written to you for days, for I have had nothing to tell you. Really, we have grown very unceremonious—we have quite forgotten to be polite to one another.

Coming back here provided me with no news. The Duke of Wellington is ill in bed ; I have not seen him. Lady Conyngham came back to town only yesterday. She knows what the King wishes, and his Ministers don't ; I don't either. On this point, she is very discreet. I saw her for a moment ; she told me that the King was calm, and ready for any difficulties that might present themselves, but that his mind was made up. Which way it is made up I have no idea. He

¹ Lord Alvanley, celebrated gambler, wit and man of pleasure : admired by Byron who declared that he had "talent to be anything." See Dighton's caricature, *Going to White's*.

listened to Lord Liverpool for three hours, but gave him not a word in reply. That is how he will behave with each of his Ministers, and, when he has heard each separately, he will announce his wishes. What is certain is that Liverpool will put forward Canning's name. What is equally certain is that the King will have none of him. Which of the two will win? Everything is still vague. This state of uncertainty is bound to delay the Duke of Wellington's departure. Besides, for the moment his health prevents it; he will not stir before next week.

Friday.

The Duke of Wellington has been in the gravest danger. The inflammation went to his head. They cupped him and that diminished the congestion. His doctor writes to me twice a day. This morning's bulletin is not bad, but I do not feel comfortable yet.

The King will not decide anything before he has spoken to the Duke of Wellington. He listens to what people say and nothing more. Among the people who have spoken to him, Lord Liverpool is insistent on having Canning, the Chancellor on not having him. I believe that at heart the majority of the Cabinet are against his entering the Government, but Liverpool sticks to it obstinately. Wellington is for him too, and so are many other Government supporters. My belief is that the King will be forced to have him. I shall be sorry and you will not be too pleased. I have only a slight personal acquaintance with Mr. Canning; but I know his principles very well. He flatters the popular party, which is not favourable to the Alliance. He is away at the moment. He is letting others move on his behalf, because he is fairly sure of himself. His wife makes up to me a great deal. Lady Conyngham asked me yesterday if we should

like him as Minister of Foreign Affairs. I said that I did not think so. Lord Stowell,¹ the first jurisconsult in England and a man of the highest reputation, said to me the other day : "He is a dangerous enemy and a very unsafe friend." The King sounded me about Wellington's opinion ; I said that I did not know. That was a lie, for I know that he will urge the King to have Canning ; but I am in no hurry for him to know. Everybody is very busy over the intrigue. The Duke's illness is delaying the decision ; nothing could be more inopportune both for affairs here and for the Congress.

The 7th.

The King had decided yesterday to announce his wishes to his Ministers today ; and his wishes are to appoint Canning. Unless he has changed his mind within twenty-four hours, it will be settled today. Letters have been exchanged between him and the Duke of Wellington. When the King told Lady Conyngham his decision, she exclaimed as I might have done. Then he said : "Very well, if you like I will not appoint him ; I will change the Government and put in the Whigs." At this, there was another cry of alarm (for she has not the necessary courage). So the King told her that there were only these alternatives, since Lord Liverpool had told him that the Government could not stand without Canning ; so let's have Canning. His wife, who came to see me yesterday, told me that, if he accepted the Ministry, it would be merely as a gesture, that both in foreign and in domestic affairs his hands would be tied ; and that the present state of things was not at all to his liking.

¹ William Scott, created Lord Stowell ; friend of Dr. Johnson ; brother to Lord Eldon.

Sept. 1822] THE KING AND THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

Sunday, the 8th.

The King has postponed his decision till tomorrow. He insists on the necessity of seeing Wellington before making it ; all the same, he knows what he thinks. The difficulty, according to the King, is to be reconciled with a man whom he had said he never wanted to see again in his life. The Duke of Wellington said that was not a difficulty for a Sovereign ; that, as his quarrel with his subject could not be regarded as a quarrel between equals, it followed that a reconciliation involved neither explanations nor apologies ; that it was enough that the King should say : "I forgive," and the whole thing would be finished and done with for both parties. The King appreciated this point of view ; and, from that moment, he has spoken of the Duke as his best, his only friend, as the most reliable and the most loyal of men. All the better that he should think this way. It puts the Duke in a position to do a great deal of good. From what small beginnings do love and hatred spring !

The 9th.

Wellington is out of danger. The improvement has been so rapid that yesterday he worked in his study. He wants to leave in three days. The doctors think it would be dangerous. I hope they will not let him do anything which might bring on a relapse. You cannot imagine how delighted I am at his recovery.

The King will appoint Canning today. The Duke of Wellington urged this decision very strongly. Well, I hope they are right ; but I cannot help feeling very mistrustful at heart. He is an intriguer, restless and ambitious. His colleagues are not at all like that ; and honesty alone cannot put up a successful fight against all that armoury of wit and artifice.

Tuesday, the 10th.

This is what Wellington thinks. The Government need Canning in the House of Commons, and their supporters have threatened to withdraw their votes if he is not appointed. The Ministers know him for an intriguer ; but, if they offer him an important position, they deprive his intriguing spirit of its object. He will have reached the pinnacle of success and will be obliged to do everything in his power to remain there and, consequently, to support his colleagues. They do not think, therefore, that they have any reason to distrust him ; but they have decided to keep a careful watch over him at the start. If he makes difficulties, they will send him packing—and they can, for the step the King has taken would prove that they have done all they could to secure his services, and that it was he who had refused ; and both the Canning faction, and the whole body of members who are now asking for his appointment, would no longer have the right to complain, since they could blame no-one for the failure but Canning himself. Canning's present position is unique. The Opposition hates him ; the King loathes him ; the Ministers distrust him ; those who want him do not like him. His personal following is a mere drop in the ocean ; and, with that exception, there is not a soul in the United Kingdom who has the slightest respect for him. In spite of all these reasons for keeping him out, public opinion demands him ; and he will receive the most important post in the Government.

The 13th.

Canning has arrived. The King's letter did not satisfy him. He declares that it is exactly the same as being given a ticket for Almack's¹ and finding written on the back : "*Admit*

¹ Madame de Lieven, together with Lady Jersey, Lady Sefton, Princess Esterhazy and others, was one of the Patronesses of Almack's, and distributed the jealously guarded tickets of admission.

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“ADMIT THE ROGUE”

the rogue.” Yesterday, he replied that he would not accept the Ministry unless the King withdrew the offensive expressions in his letter. Negotiations went on all day. At midnight, the affair was still unsettled. But my friend whispered in my ear that Canning wanted the Ministry. She has become a power, for her husband¹ is Canning’s confidential adviser. No change in the Cabinet has ever interested the public so much.

The 14th.

Canning has said Yes. Lord Granville & Co. have decided him. So that is over. Wellington has taken a very large—indeed, a preponderant—part in the affair. He does not love Canning : but it was represented to him that the Government needed a support. Since then, he has displayed equal zeal in winning round the King and then persuading Canning to accept. For the moment, the Duke will be the heart of the administration, the real Prime Minister. I hope he will maintain this position. . . .

Two days after this letter, we left London for the Continent. At Salzburg, we met Count Nesselrode and Prince Metternich. After spending a few days with them, we went to Verona. On December 15, we left Verona for England. (My husband had been plenipotentiary at the Congress together with Pozzo and Tatischeff.)² From Verona, we took with us Prince Esterhazy and Victor Metternich.

¹ The irresistible Granville Leveson Gower, friend of Lady Bessborough and recipient of some of her finest letters : now Lord Granville.

² Pozzo di Borgo, though Corsican by origin, served first Austria, then Russia, and subsequently became Russian ambassador in Paris. Tatischeff was Russian ambassador at Vienna.

PART III

The Rise of Canning

The Rise of Canning

CASTLEREAGH'S death left a gap that it was difficult to fill. One may not now admire the principles of Castlereagh. One may even subscribe to the savage attacks that were levelled against him both during his lifetime and immediately after his death ; but in many respects his conduct seems sane and praiseworthy. He had high ideals, and his sense of duty was beyond question. Among his colleagues, no one else possessed the same high qualifications, the same comprehensive knowledge of public affairs, the same degree of diplomatic experience. Who was to represent England at the Congress of Verona ? Lieven repeatedly pressed for a definite reply ; but the English Government responded that, until they had discovered a new Foreign Secretary, the question of the Congress could not be raised. At last, after tortuous negotiations, Canning stepped into Castlereagh's vacant post. Whereas Castlereagh had supported the principle of a consolidated monarchical Europe—what Byron had called “dull, stupid old system . . . poisoning straws on Kings' noses instead of wringing them off”—Canning distrusted European entanglements, royal cabals and reactionary conferences ; and, on Canning's instructions, Wellington was able to frustrate the chief objects of the Congress of Verona, protesting against the proposed intervention by the Allied Governments in the affairs of Spain.

Madame de Lieven naturally disliked Canning ; and, on her return from the Congress of Verona, she became involved in the so-called “Cottage Clique” and a prime instigator in the plot “de

faire sauter M. Canning." Among other members of the cabal were Münster, the Hanoverian minister, Esterhazy and his secretary, Neumann, and, at a later period, the French Ambassador, the Prince de Polignac. It is pleasant to remember that Canning triumphed. Having upset the Congress of Verona, he declared that he was opposed to the principles of the Holy Alliance and to "that predominating areopagitical spirit," which was "never intended for the government of the world" and, on behalf of the British Government, expressed warm good wishes for the success of the Spanish constitutional party. In spite of the "Cottage Clique," he continued to follow a line which, although it conformed to his own beliefs and delighted Liberals all over Europe, was antipathetic to the majority of his Tory colleagues. He pursued his aims with a shrewdness and single-mindedness that eventually won him the devoted adherence of Madame de Lieven.

Milan, December 16, 1822.

Here we are ; I am still alive and, for a travelling companion, very well. We reached Brescia yesterday at seven in the evening. We left again at six this morning and got to Milan at half-past one. You will be surprised to hear that I have seen everything. Prince Esterhazy and Victor introduced me to the Cathedral, the arena, and the triumphal arch. I saw the King of England's hussars ; I saw some snow—all sorts of nice things, all in the space of half an hour, and I am feeling very learned.

I did not get quinsy ; your tea cured me. It is atrociously cold, but there is glorious sunshine, which must have come out for the Emperor's entry, and yours, into Venice. We leave tomorrow at six and spend the night in Turin. My cavaliers are dining with Count Batthyany and are going on to the Opera. I did not feel equal to accompanying them.



George Canning, by Sir Thomas Lawrence

Paris, December 25.

We arrived here early yesterday. At Turin, we were afraid of being caught by the snow. We travelled all night so as to cross the Mont Cenis by daylight. Once this great barrier was behind us, we found ourselves in fifteen degrees of frost, and L . . . (indecipherable) offered wretched quarters, so we went on to Chambéry. After that, we stopped every night. At Lyons, Paul Esterhazy left us, and we felt all the more cheerful. Victor was good-tempered and good company ; and we were a happy party.

My cold refuses to leave me ; sometimes it is on my chest, sometimes in my throat, and now it is in my eyes ; but it is nothing. Warmth and rest will put me right. I shall not stir out for the first few days, and the first days will be almost the last, for we intend to leave again on the 30th. I have not seen anyone here yet ; but this is what I heard in my talk with Pozzo. Wellington spent his time intriguing. Villèle¹ is against the Spanish war ; he supported Villèle. To this end, he went to the extent of paying marked attentions to Madame du Cayla.² The Cabinet is at sixes and sevens. Chateaubriand, who arrived here professing the same opinions as M. de Montmorenci,³ said since that his personal relations with M. de Villèle prevent him from differing from him on principle. The King supports M. de Villèle, and a discomfiture for the Ministry is expected—the first good result of the machinations of the great “*baby*.” . . .

The 26th.

Pozzo came today to tell me not what he knows, but what he wanted to say. He calls you the “Grand Inquisitor of

¹ M. de Villèle, one of the leaders of the French Ultras : trusted minister of Louis XVIII.

² Louis XVIII had now fallen under the spell of Madame du Cayla, who used her influence on behalf of the Ultras.

³ The new French Foreign Minister.

Europe"; but he puts the phrase in somebody else's mouth. He is very much incensed with the Duke of Wellington, who everyone says behaved like an intriguer while he was here. I know from F. Lamb that he received orders recalling him to London, for he wanted to stay in Paris. He was perfectly happy, between the women who ran after him and the ones he ran after in his turn. It appears that our friend Montmorenci will be thrown out; it is a bad year for honest folk. Everyone here is tremendously excited. I know nothing more soothing than the bustle of Paris. Everybody takes a hand; each utter nonentity behaves as if he had a Ministry to form or a Minister to overthrow; everyone wants a finger in the pie.

Paris, the 28th.

I hear from London that Canning went to Brighton to offer Lord Francis Conyngham the post of Under-Secretary of State. He was at once asked to dine. This honour had never been extended to him before. I suppose the young man will accept—the job is worth £2,000 a year. It is not a bad idea; it establishes a relation between Canning and the King, and that may lead to something further; but it will not raise him in public esteem. I fancy that the Duke of Wellington is already rather displeased with him. I am very curious about my reception in that society. The King has asked me to come straight to Brighton without stopping in London, just as if he had guessed what I was thinking.

This morning, I had a sort of explanation with Paul Esterhazy; it was started by both sides, I don't quite know how. He told me what he had said to you about his alienation from me. I replied perfectly frankly, and I proved to him, by facts he remembers, that I had perhaps been of service to his wife. That done, I told him that my friendship was

there to take or leave, but that I advised him to take it, simply because you were anxious, for the sake of affairs in general and because it was the wish of both our Courts, that our relations should be good ; that I was ready to show him that the past was forgotten and that I wanted to trust him ; but that he would have to make some move himself. He replied that he would like nothing better, from every point of view ; and that, as a first mark of confidence, he was going to tell me that I inspired him with none. This confession struck me as so funny that I burst out laughing. Afterwards, there was nothing to be done but to tell him that I never took unnecessary trouble, and that I should not argue with him ; but that, in the meantime, I respected even the disagreeable virtues, and that I liked his plain-speaking. Somebody interrupted us ; he took my hand in the most friendly way, which was surprising in view of what we had been saying to one another, and observed : “Then I can count on your friendship ?”—“‘Then’ is good,” I replied, “but you can count on my always acting in the interests of the policy we both share.” Really I think I am a kind person. What do you think about Paul ?

Brighton, January 5, 1823.

Here I am, at the end of my journey. I have seen my dear little George once again. The child’s joy, his pretty little face and his caresses have given me singular happiness.

I left Paris on the morning of the 2nd. On the 3rd, I reached Dover after travelling all night. We had a good crossing ; but, as we only embarked at five in the afternoon, it was pitch-dark when we neared the English coast. The packet-boat could not get in, and stayed out at sea. I decided on taking the small boat, much to the disgust of my husband, who does not fancy jaunts of that kind. There was a swell ;

the night was pitch-black. Getting into the boat was no fun at all ; there was no gangway, no rope ladder, nothing ; one had to wait for a wave to lift the cockle-shell high enough for one to throw oneself from the deck of the packet-boat into the arms of a waiting sailor. I managed very cleverly. When we got to shore, they had to run the boat aground ; that was the worst part, for the waves drove us ashore and then dashed over us, and I was drenched from head to foot. When we reached the inn, the old house-keeper made me drink a glass of brandy and put me to bed ; that is the great English remedy, and it did me good. Yesterday, we arrived in London in time for dinner. I spent the night there, and at dawn I left to come here. I have not seen anyone yet. I am so tired that I am going to bed, although it is not yet six o'clock. The King has just sent to ask me to dine ; but I am not fit to see him today. I shall find many changes here. The day before yesterday, as I passed the hill of North Cray, I heaved a deep sigh at the thought of poor Castle-reagh. What a man ; what a loss ! His death was the only blot on his life.

The 6th.

I have just this minute seen the favourite. She welcomed me in the most gushing style ; but I did not receive any interesting information from that quarter. She does not occupy herself with foreign politics. She is not particularly well disposed towards Mr. Canning and laughed with me over his cleverness in giving the post of Under-Secretary of State to her son, adding : "I should have been a fool not to take advantage of it." She told me, however, that, since the appointment, the King has been on good terms with Canning, though not as yet extravagantly so. She sighed a score of times over the King not going to Verona. I told her we must manage it better next summer.

The 7th.

I found the King changed. He has aged a great deal in these last three months, and he limps noticeably. When his first raptures were over, he asked me how I was. "I think often of you, Sir ; but I have too much to tell you to be able to start here." We were surrounded by people ; and himself he seemed uneasy and bothered by the presence of the Duchess of Clarence, whom he was receiving for the first time. "Well, we will have a long chat tomorrow, because I, too, have a great many things to tell you." After that, he asked me in a low voice : "Do you think there will be war ?"—"I am not God Almighty that I should be able to tell you, Sir ; but my feeling is that there won't be." He heaved a great sigh, and the conversation became merely general. We moved into the ballroom. I was so bored that I looked ill. The King noticed it and gave me leave to withdraw ; I took advantage of it immediately.

The King adores my little boy ; this is why. I was very much surprised to find that everyone at Court spoke to me about him with ecstasy. He is a nice child, and that is all. But no, people at Court think him the most beautiful child in the world, because the King has discovered that George is like him. Now see what will happen. Up to the present, he says it as a joke ; in a few days, he will be saying it meaningly ; later, he will let it be understood that he has good reasons for saying it ; and, still later, he will persuade himself that he really can take the credit—that is how his mind works. When all is said and done, the truth is that my little boy is very like his father, but even more like old Madame de Lieven ; and there was never any likeness between her and his Britannic Majesty.

I left you to go and see the King. I spent three hours alone with him ; and, although I have only a moment's respite before dining with him, I will spend it in giving you

an account of our conversation. First of all, he spoke to me of happenings at Verona. He thought precisely as we did about the behaviour of the Duke of Wellington at the Congress. He justified the selection by the simple fact that there was nobody else to send. "All my Ministers are fools. Canning had just started. Wellington was the only one who had followed affairs and who knew the Sovereigns personally and the heads of their Cabinets. I sent him. He had the great, great disadvantage of being incapable of flexibility or of making a diplomatic approach. He sets about a question like a battery of cannon; that was bound to do harm at Verona, where conciliation was essential; it is very unfortunate. Nevertheless, our position, on the whole, is what it was; we are lost unless we stick to our policy."

At this point, I told him how much he had been missed at the Congress; how much his new Minister was distrusted; how useful it would be if he took a hand himself, seeing that, since the death of Lord Castlereagh, the Allied Cabinets no longer had a real friend in the English Cabinet except the King. "That is true," he replied, "but we have to be careful of our situation. I look on Prince Metternich as the first statesman of Europe; but he has one fault—that of relying too much on his own abilities, with the result that he is not afraid of putting himself and other people in false positions. Anyhow, I am fairly well situated just now. My Government no longer includes anyone who is not second-rate; and Mr. Canning has to make up to me in order to retain his post, for his colleagues loathe him. I am aware of all this; but, at the same time, we must keep an eye on the House of Commons, where his ability makes him powerful. The House is more Liberal than you care for: that's the trouble; but I pursue my own policy, and, if I am compelled to make apparent sacrifices, you will see that essentially I do not change." Afterwards, he went into details. He inveighed against

France and the duplicity of her Cabinet. "Always intriguing, always playing a double game ; and she herself will be the first victim. Your Emperor does not know what to do with his army to prevent disaffection ; it is to his advantage to use it. Metternich will do all he can to prevent his using it in the East ; and the Emperor will make war in the West to get it off his hands. Hence his zeal for Spain. I believe he is a good Royalist now, however much of a Jacobin he may once have been ; but unhappily he never will stick to a moderate course." He reviewed the position of all the Powers, dwelt a long time on Portugal, and was loud in praise of Canning's behaviour in the explanation that he gave of the article of the treaty promising Portugal England's guarantee. This did not interest me much ; I wanted to get him to tell me what he thought of Canning. He replied cautiously, "He is a clever man. He is trying to win me over and shows every readiness to follow me in politics as well as in personal affairs. I wanted him to give Francis the post of Under-Secretary of State, and he did it. True, that was to his own advantage ; for it was the cleverest move he could make. For the rest, he is a plebeian and has no manners ; as for his brilliant repartees, I have never heard any. He dined here, and said nothing but Yes and No." All this goes to prove that Canning will have to rely on the relations which are being established between him and the Conyng-hams to retain the support of the Court ; but those relations may become very intimate ; and, if that happens, one can answer for nothing.

The King asked many questions about Esterhazy ; he seems annoyed with him. He showed me a letter from the Princess de la Tour, in which she tells the King of her son-in-law's resolve not to stay in England but to ask for the post in Paris. She implored the King to prevent him ; since her daughter would die of grief. The King also showed me his answer

to the letter. He wrote that, as last summer he had written to the Emperor of Austria and to you yourself, attesting his satisfaction with Prince Esterhazy, he could only suppose that his desire to leave England proceeded from personal motives; that, if this was so, it was not for him to stand in the way, and that consequently he would not intervene. He spoke of the wife, and told me a number of stories about her which he had heard after she left. I replied that, when there was so much to be said, it was uncharitable to say too much; that she was very indiscreet, and that her affairs had perhaps been exaggerated.

After that, came the most important subject, Lady Conyngham. He implored me to use my influence in favour of the journey he wants to make on the Continent. He will make it, if she is willing. He subordinates all his wishes to hers. He asks her as a favour to take part in everything, to do everything; and he wants me to guide her. I have forgotten to tell you thousands of things; but I shall come back to them. Meanwhile, you have what is essential. He seems to me only moderately pleased with Wellington. My credit is greater than ever, if that is possible.

The 8th.

The King's first remark at dinner was: "I have never had a more interesting conversation in my life, than I had this morning with Madame de Lieven; and I think I can say without boasting that we both talked very well. If you are writing to Metternich, tell him that, between ourselves, we call him 'OR'¹; he is real gold, the purest and most precious." He was very proud of the pun. He thinks very highly of you.

¹ Oesterreiches Reich [?].

Jan. 1823]

M. DE LIEVEN

London, the 9th.

I saw my friend for a moment, but only in public. She seems very anxious to put me on good terms with Canning. She tells me that he will do everything to please me : we shall see.

M. de Lieven came back just a moment ago from a long interview ; and, strange to say, he was extremely satisfied. He went at once to warn Paul to be ready for his conference tomorrow. I do not know any details yet ; besides, you will receive them through official channels ; but I know M. de Lieven well enough to trust his impressions in matters of this kind. He found Canning very well disposed, perfectly reasonable—in a word, all he could wish and just the opposite of what he expected. As far as personal relations are concerned, he is exceedingly attentive to M. de Lieven ; and I do not doubt that he will adopt the same tone with your Ambassador. We are dining with him tomorrow. He has detained the Granvilles in town, specially to be present on this great occasion. It will be the first time we have met, he and I, since he became a great man. Lady Granville is extraordinarily arch about it—it is just as if she wanted to confer him on me as a lover. I shan't take him.

The 10th.

This morning, I had a letter from Lady Conyngham telling me that the King is very ill and in bed. She writes in an extremely agitated style ; I hope she is exaggerating. Meanwhile, our visit has been put off ; I am the more pleased that I have already been to see him. Our two Ambassadors are on the best possible terms, just as you wished that they should be. I am very friendly to him ; so it will be his fault if that does not succeed.

London, January 11, 1823.

Here I am back at the system of numbers ;¹ and, as usual, I send my letters off in great haste. I don't know how I have managed to get to my fourth letter since Milan. It is not a month since I left you. Ever since, it has seemed to me that nothing is more probable than another gathering almost as complete as the Congress of Verona.

England stifles me ; it lies heavy as a stone on my chest. I feel its influence both morally and physically. A thick white mist, half ice-cold, half damp ; not a ray of sun, and a sensation of appalling monotony, as if time were falling drop by drop on one's head. It seems to me that nothing is so calculated to stir the imagination as this, the least poetical country in the world. The very absence of any object capable of stimulating heart or mind promotes a perpetual disposition to melancholy and those disordered flights of fancy in which the English have as yet found no rival. A London fog gives a vivid picture of chaos and the void. There is something positively hellish in the effect exerted by the sight of that opaque atmosphere. Really, it makes me shudder.

I handed over my big letter yesterday. I don't know if the courier has left. Perhaps I shall add a few more sheets. However, I have nothing new to tell you. The dinner with Mr. Canning yesterday went off with a great deal of assiduity on his part, especially towards me. I thought he had a more pleasing manner and rather more assurance. As he took me in to dinner, he said he hoped that I should treat him kindly and with friendship, and he would do all he could to deserve it. I think that he will take the trouble ; we shall see what I think of him. He boasted to me of having been extremely satisfied with his interview with M. de Lieven,

¹ Madame de Lieven wrote her letters in journal-form, and sent them—numbered—as opportunity offered.

and of finding that they could get on very well together. I said in reply that I deeply regretted that it had not been possible to get into touch with him ; and that I was convinced that his prejudices, such as they might be, would disappear when he found himself faced with whatever it was that most alarmed him. Indeed, I believe he can be managed ; and I think he is spurred on by his pride to try to win the confidence of his colleagues on the Continent. The Duke of York took up all my morning yesterday. He has softened a little towards Mr. Canning ; but he has held himself very much aloof from the whole Government during the last four months. He still distrusts the individual, and will not approach him until the first party conflicts in the House of Commons have given him an idea of the degree of confidence to be placed in the domestic policy of the new Leader of Parliament. The independent members of the Commons refrain from declaring themselves, so that it is not yet possible to judge if the Government will be able to hold out or no.

The 13th.

In my long letter the other day, I omitted several details which I must now give you. I had spent an hour with the favourite before going to see the King ; she displayed some anxiety about the inconstancy of human affections, and added : "What a pity now if all this were to end ; for you must admit that it is charming." She looked round ; her drawing-room is like a fairy's boudoir. This vulgar way of expressing her fears nearly made me burst out laughing, for it would not be her lover's heart that she would regret, but his diamonds, pearls, handsome furniture and good dinners. The King, on the other hand, said to me an hour later : "You see how she takes advantage of her position to push her family. Oh, she knows very well when she is well off."

Here is a lover whose eyes are wide open ; if he sees as clearly as that, I do not understand how his love can last long. But it does last, simply because he needs a habit.

The favourite tries to win me over ; and, to this end, she will retain me in the King's circle ; for she thinks that, far from injuring her, I shall always speak on her behalf. Anyone but myself might take it into her head to become her rival. On his side, the King likes me to be friendly with his favourite, because my advice is always on his side, and—what is more—is always received without suspicion, since my position as a foreigner gives it an air of neutrality. The son, too, came to consult me. I told him : “Always be the King's man, and do not become Canning's man ; if you do this, you will govern the Minister.” Don't you think I am developing into an intriguer ? Yet, really, I find nothing but good intentions in my heart and mind ; and, when I remember this, I am not worried by the accusation.

The 14th.

The Duke of Wellington writes from my friend's house, full of surprise that I have not been to see him there. Afterwards he says, as if he were saying Good morning : “I have just put nine grains of powder into Lord Granville's face out shooting.” There's a nice thing to happen. The King is a little better.

The 17th.

The Duke of Wellington stopped in town for a few hours yesterday. He arrived at my house and was absolutely delighted to see me. . . . I asked him a few questions about Canning. He thinks he is over-active and too fond of correspondence (this from him !). He thinks that he is often carried away by his own cleverness and that he wants tact.

All these little complaints prove to me that there is no longer very great unity. If you take into account the insidious questions that Canning addressed to our two Ambassadors about Wellington's behaviour at Verona, you will see that they are both more on the look-out than is quite friendly. There remains only Liverpool to stand up for what he has done. The other Ministers are all more or less hostile.

The 19th.

It is cold, and I am not going out. I have caught up with all that has happened in domestic affairs during my absence. I see that the Radicals have lost ground, and that there will be a very marked separation between them and the Whigs in Parliament. I notice also that the Viceroy of Ireland has behaved like a fool; but his folly may have serious consequences. I will tell you something about this. He forbade the annual rejoicings on the anniversary of the birthday of William III, alleging that they fomented party feeling. The Orangemen were furious. They insulted the Viceroy and hurled a bottle into his box at the play. The assailants were arrested and tried for attempted homicide. The Grand Jury in Dublin threw out the bill and said that a misdemeanour had been committed, but not a crime. The Marquess Wellesley began another prosecution, on the charge of *lèse-majesté*, and had it sent to the Assizes. The Assizes will not be held until March. Then, secretly, he invited the great noblemen to call meetings in the constituencies, to vote addresses congratulating the Viceroy on his escape from assassination. Thus Ireland is divided; and, at a time when the country had hardly recovered from the disturbances of the past year, a bottle plunges it into civil war again. From start to finish, the Viceroy has been in the wrong. He ought not to have forbidden a usage consecrated by custom, which,

from its very antiquity, no longer had any public effect. What he did was to revive faction instead of repressing it ; and he should have known better than to mistake a bottle for a bomb. That was giving ridicule a weapon. Next, he should not have excited the constituencies by the petty parade of deputations and addresses. The whole affair is singularly stupid. People say that the whole thing is pure Wellesley.

The 21st.

There is nobody whose company I like so much as Lady Granville's. She understands everything, folly as well as wit. She puts everything in its place, and in its right perspective, with a tact, a readiness and a simplicity that are quite delightful. She knows you very well ; she must be cleverer than I am, for she understands you from hearsay, as I understand you from acquaintance. What she finds particularly remarkable about you is the hatred, the enthusiasm, the distrust that pursue you in turn. She sees you as both god and devil ; and I can understand her perplexity ; for I have not a very clear idea of you myself.

Strathfield-saye, January 26.

Since my last letter, I have spent a few days in the country with Lady Cowper. I was prevented from writing to you there by the bitter weather. My room was so cold that I could not hold my pen ; and the drawing-room was no good for writing, because nobody went out, not even husbands. I returned yesterday ; I stopped only an hour in London and came on here in the most horrible weather. The blizzard was so violent that the postilions could not find the road. So we did not arrive for dinner till nine o'clock in the evening.

Jan. 1823] WELLINGTON'S BEHAVIOUR AT VERONA

London, the 28th

I am horribly ill, I can hardly hold up my head; I have a terribly bad chest and tonight I have had a high temperature. All the same, I do not regret having gone to stay with the Duke of Wellington, for I think I have done some good. You will judge from my letter and from your Ambassador's report.

I began by having a long talk with the Duke about what happened at Verona. He said that he quite understood that his visit had had worse results than those which had at first appeared, that every day the separation of England from the great Alliance became, and would become, more noticeable: that it was certainly a misfortune for everyone and a very great misfortune for England; and that he did not know to what to ascribe it. Was it Londonderry's death, or his own behaviour at Verona? He could not answer for the reasons, but the mischief was there: and yet he thought he had performed his duty in everything he had done. I replied that there was not one of us who did not regret the differences on present questions, but that they had surprised nobody, it was natural enough that England had not acted in the same way as the other powers, seeing that she had not the same moral incentives; that perhaps one need not be so surprised at what was happening now, as at the fact that, for eight years, powers so dissimilar in their constitutions had been able to see eye to eye on all questions. However, the question confronting us today was grave; the spirit of revolution must be combated boldly. The time and the circumstances—would a right choice be made? That was what remained to be seen. But the danger of revolution existed for all—less, it was true, for England than for her fellow nations. Hence her lukewarmness at the moment; nevertheless, her calculations might well turn out to be inaccurate.

"Do you take us for Jacobins?" responded the Duke.

"Damme, I'll show you what I wrote about Spain ; and you will see if M. de Metternich ever said anything stronger."—"I shall be very glad to read it. But why do you tolerate a suspicion that you are not acting on these lines ? Why has Lord Fitzroy Somerset's mission not been explained ?"—"It was I who drew up his instructions ; I will show you them too, and you will see if there is any cause for complaints or suspicions."—"Perhaps I shall cease to suspect you after I have read them ; but am I the proper person to receive these confidences ?" He did not reply.

Next morning, he brought his correspondence to my room. It consists of : (1) a letter from Toreno¹ and his reply ; (2) a letter from Alava² and his reply. I enclose these documents ; I have transcribed them as well as I can remember them. After reading them, I thanked him for the confidence he had shown me, and told him that, considering the impression they had made on me, I was exceedingly sorry that others could not share in it ; that it would greatly change the idea that had been formed of the behaviour of his Cabinet ; and that I thought it was to his advantage to re-establish a confidence that had been badly shaken.

"But I have shown you these letters. You can give an account of them to your husband and to Prince Metternich."—"So I will ; but that is not enough. Read them yourself to Count de Lieven and Prince Esterhazy ; thus you will do more good than by showing them only to me."—"I cannot do that without the permission of my Cabinet."—"Then do you approve of your Cabinet making itself out worse than it is ? Frankly, no-one places any confidence in Mr. Canning ; and it is quite natural, for we do not know him well enough. If personal relations with you were valuable, even at a time

¹ Comte de Toreno : Spanish patriot and prominent member of the Liberal party, who had returned from exile in 1820.

² Spanish representative at the Court of France.

when our confidence in Lord Londonderry was everything we could desire, how much more precious these relations must be now, with a Minister who inspires mistrust ! You," I went on, "can do good, a great deal of good ; don't lose your chance."—"Listen," he said, "it was my opinion that Fitzroy should show M. de Villèle the instructions we gave him for his mission to Madrid. Mr. Canning opposed this. He was afraid that the French Cabinet would be indiscreet, and that the Spanish Government would be informed by them of the object of the mission, even before Fitzroy arrived in Madrid, which would, of course, have defeated the purpose of his journey ; and I believe that Mr. Canning was right. So you see that I cannot confide to others something of which we would not inform France, who is directly concerned in the question."—"No, that is not logical. You have never put us on the same footing as France in matters of confidence. I shall not ask you to show Pozzo anything you want kept secret, but I repeat that you can confide it with perfect safety to my husband and Esterhazy. Have you ever, during the past eight years, regretted placing confidence in them, and have you not always told each other everything ?"—"Yes, but if our advice is to be effective with Spain, she must not suspect that we are in any sort of league against her with the other Allies ; that would be disastrous."—"I repeat what I said : think of the good you could do if you showed that you trusted us." He began to think. You may suppose that this conversation was rather a strain on my virtue. You will realise that a lesser woman would have been very happy to have had the monopoly of the Duke of Wellington's confidences. You can imagine that, for a moment, I smiled to myself at the thought of being the direct channel of information interesting to my Court and to you. But, when I reflected what good it might do, I immediately sacrificed my vanity, and finally persuaded Wellington

to show Esterhazy and my husband what he had read to me.

Canning is in touch with the Opposition. Holland House is loud in his praises. Many of the most violent members hold their peace or are waiting for Canning's first moves in Parliament. If he consolidates his position in the Commons, that is to say if he does nothing foolish, he will be master ; he will be able, just as it suits him, either to dominate the Cabinet, or, if the Cabinet refuses to be dominated, to open negotiations with the Opposition, to turn out the former and join up with the latter. The leader of the Commons is the real head of the Government. I base my hopes on his own unruly and hot-headed character. He will commit some glaring indiscretion, which is bound to unseat him. The flattery of the Opposition, and his attentiveness towards them, can be perfectly well explained by his ambiguous position with regard to his colleagues. It remains to be seen what the King and his favourite will want. I fancy the latter will be on Canning's side ; but it will not be so easy to win over the King.

A word about Wellington. He seems to me to be feeling some slight remorse for what happened at Verona and to be realising that, with a little more diplomacy and flexibility on his part, things might have turned out differently. His irritation has subsided. His position has become clearer ; he no longer has any responsibility to bear. He looks at the situation in perspective. His point of view has become more correct. He sees the harm done ; and I think he is very much inclined to do everything he can to make reparation. You will understand that this inclination may be turned to good account. Canning is still of a different opinion. The other Ministers are scarcely concerned with foreign policy. What is more, they feel a personal affection for Wellington. The King looks on him as the only person he can trust. In a

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LONDON AND PARIS

word, Wellington in London is quite different from Wellington in Verona. I can promise you that. It even extends to his manners ; for here he is quite polite.

The 30th.

We have just received the King of France's speech. So the game has begun ; what will they say here ? I shall bear the brunt of the Ministerial fury, for Canning and Wellington are dining with us today ; and, although I am not at all well, I cannot resist the temptation of coming down to see them. It is our first dinner for Mr. Canning. Austria, Prussia and France will be of the party ; that will annoy Mr. Canning. He will feel he is very much in the minority. My friend's lorgnette will be kept busy, for she is beginning to take a great interest in politics.

I have not had a line from you since Venice. You must allow me to feel offended. I long for your letters. What have you to say about M. de Chateaubriand ? What do you think of the fusillade of notes between London and Paris : M. de Chateaubriand's of January 23 was received quite civilly by Mr. Canning. The King is still far from well ; he will not be fit to attend the opening of Parliament. The Duke of York is very ill too ; he has been attacked like me by an inflammation of the lungs ; nobody escapes this frightful winter. The Duke of Wellington gave himself up for lost the other day. A cabriolet went right over him ; he has just been bled.

The 31st.

I came down last night ; it was a very stiff dinner. Mr. Canning hardly opened his mouth. The Duke was whispering in my ear the whole time, saying all the ill he could think of about my other neighbour. My husband was angry with

me for not talking enough to the latter, but I don't see the necessity of going to any great trouble. We hardly know one another, and I have a feeling that our enforced relations will not last long. There is something plebeian about that family. My friend, in spite of her infatuation, looks as if she were embarrassed by it. Mr. Canning fired off a few epigrams against the Ultras, but said nothing else to any point.

The reports of the English Minister in Munich say that your visit to that city failed in its object. I remarked to the Duke of Wellington that you had told me just the opposite. He laughed for a minute and then replied: "It would be odd if our man were so misinformed." I answered: "Odd—and likely." He gave me details that seemed to me absurd. I repeat this piece of gossip, to show you how well meaning agents are. This morning, Canning spoke very ill of the French Government to my husband. The speech of the King of France put him beside himself. He chiefly disapproves of the passage in which he says that it is for Ferdinand to give laws to his people, and that they cannot be anything but legal if they emanate from the throne. He asked: "How do you expect us to support, or even tolerate, such a doctrine, when our form of government is rooted in the very opposite principle? Listen to the opinions of the whole of England, and you will see if we can do anything to help people with such ideas; it leaves us helpless."

Certainly, that part of the speech was ill-advised just now. What is more, I find the rest of it just as pitiful. Does the King explain the motives of the war; does he say if it is a European war or a French war? Not a word of that. There is plenty of stuff about St. Louis and Henri IV, plenty of Bourbon talk and nothing else. Really he might as well have wound up like Pozzo: "Long live glory and the Bourbons!"

My baby plays a great deal with his cards; he is very careful

of them. I told him they were from you ; and he asked if you were a dandy.

Esterhazy has an unpleasant affair on his hands, about which Canning spoke to me yesterday, and in which it seems to me that he is wrong. Bettera¹ insulted your Ambassador in the street with the object of getting money from him. Esterhazy demands that the Government should protect him from the attacks of this madman—that is to say, that Bettera should be arrested. Canning replies that there is no law to meet the case, and that, unless Paul goes and makes a charge at the police station, the aggressor cannot be prosecuted. The Ambassadors—for my husband is taking an active part in the affair—maintain that it is the duty of the Government to protect an Ambassador, and that he cannot appear before a court like an ordinary individual. Canning says that he cannot make a new law. It is a bad business. Esterhazy is reduced to becoming a prisoner in his own house. Bettera is awaiting a chance to thrash him, for he told him so. Lawyers are being consulted. I don't know how it will end. Canning pretends to be upset ; but I suspect that secretly he is rather amused.

I send you Elizabeth's heir presumptive. The copy is slightly soiled ; that is because it lay on my desk while I was away, and everything turns the colour of soot here. Later, I will send you some memoirs about the reign of Mary Stuart which are very well written. Thus, you will have all the information about that particular period in the history of Great Britain. There are some curious and little-known details in the book about Mary's first years in France. For the rest, the author treats her with more indulgence than she deserves ; but that is just as well for the honour of the sex. I am so

¹ Bettera, a Dalmatian adventurer who had once been employed by Prince Esterhazy's father, and now claimed that he was entitled to a pension. The affair nearly developed into a diplomatic incident.

incapable of understanding cruelty in a woman, that I am delighted to meet someone who assures me that she did not kill her husband.

February 1.

What a long month January has been ! And what a come-down for me, from Verona to London ! How I envy you with your affairs ! Time passes quickly for you ; but, as for me, I am bored to death. My health makes me a little depressed, too. Always I have a temperature ; my chest always troubles me ; I am always in my dressing-gown. I read till my eyes are red. My baby is my only distraction.

Today, I had a furious letter from Lord Grey. I am beset by stupidity on every side. People persist in imagining that whatever is done is contrary to my personal opinion, and that I am a very liberal thinker. Someone came and told me the other day that I made an extremely clever compromise between my duty and my own personal views. I replied that I must do it far from cleverly, if people imagined that my duty and my personal views were not identical. Lord Grey is indignant over the behaviour of his Government and the "contemptible tricks" which marked the conduct of the Duke of Wellington at Verona.

The 3rd.

My friend said to me yesterday : "What do you think about Mr. Canning's attitude ? What are his relations with his colleagues ?" I replied that she ought to know better than I did, that I had seen scarcely anyone, and that I could make no guesses. "You know," she said, "what I noticed at your dinner-party was that Wellington and Canning are very anxious to make people believe that they are on good terms ; but it is not true, and at heart they hate one another. What

does Wellington say to you about Canning ?"—"Nothing but good. He does nothing but speak highly of his abilities."—"Well, Mr. Canning speaks of the Duke with great admiration." Then, looking fixedly at me, "I am in a strange position," she went on ; "nobody tells me the truth any longer ; my sister-in-law, Lady Harrowby, shuts her mouth tight and I can get nothing out of her."

Everything is happening contrary to Wellington's expectations, and he is astonished. There was a council at Brighton to decide on the speech for the opening tomorrow, and he was there. He found the King better, but not on his legs yet. Talking of him, I sent the King a few of your cards and told him that they came from "OR." I know he likes these little mysteries. The name "OR" is known only to him and to me, and he was delighted.

The 11th.

Here is a good joke. The King wrote to Lady Conyngham the day before yesterday to tell her that the Marchioness of Hertford, hearing that she and all her family had left for London, imagined that she was out of favour and that it was the beginning of an estrangement. She sent an ambassador, her nephew, to Brighton with orders to enquire on her behalf after the King's health, to let him know how anxious and concerned she was, and to put in a word to say that she was more beautiful than ever. When the King was told, he appointed an envoy on his side, in the person of Sir Edmund Nagle, the crusty sailor you saw at Hanover, who replied to the nephew : "*She may sheer another way*"—a nautical term. The favourite was terrified at this story, ordered her horses and returned post-haste to Brighton. Now what do you think was the truth of it all ? The whole thing was a fabrication. The King wanted to frighten her into coming

back, and he succeeded. I laughed till I cried. 'More beautiful than ever' at 67 is really marvellous.

The 14th.

The second case against the Dublin bottle-thrower ended like the first. The jury could not agree and the trial had to be regarded as null and void. What a triumph for faction and what a humiliation for the Government! In order to get the jury to agree, they employed the last resort allowed by law. They shut them up for twelve hours without food. The jury was not to be daunted, even by hunger. They are going to bring another case, so as to have the pleasure of being defeated a third time.

The 15th.

The English Government seems to me to be in an extraordinary position. I should like to know what the Ministers think about it themselves. Here they are on bad terms with the Triple Alliance, and on rather worse terms with France. Spain laughs at their remonstrances and their advice. With whom are they on good terms? It seems to me that they are paying very dearly for the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Canning in an odour of sanctity among the Liberals. It appears that his whole policy had this pretty end in view. Privately, they are always quarrelling amongst themselves; and Mr. Canning's indiscretions, and his demeanour towards the Opposition, make these quarrels an open secret, for everybody knows about them. The poor Duke does his best; he feels, both for the Government and for himself, the necessity of getting back into our good books—hence his confidences. He tries them, first of all, on me. When I point out to him that to do any good he must extend them to our two Ambassadors, he begins by resisting, then lets himself be per-

suaded. Now these documents are in complete contradiction to the official language of Mr. Canning, and above all to the Parliamentary language of Lord Liverpool. The Duke of Wellington told Spain that her Constitution was absurd and must be changed. Lord Liverpool considers that the revolution was conducted with moderation, and that the Spanish Governments have continued to act moderately. In that case, why change what is deserving of praise? You must admit, that the dear Duke would have to make some violent compromises if we were not very decent people.

Lord Holland is to propose in the House of Lords that England should take part in the war on the side of Spain. That does not worry me; unless I am very much mistaken, the vote will prove that nobody wants a war. I fancy that all the excitement and enthusiasm were used up on the famous fourth of February; and that, since then, heads have cooled a great deal. Yesterday my husband had a two hours' interview with Lord Liverpool. The latter made a very frank statement of his opinions and his plans. England will never agree to France recovering her former influence in Spain. She must then oppose with all her strength a struggle that might end in that way. If his advice is ignored, she will be dragged into war; and thus she will find herself champion of the Jacobins, or of the devil, he does not care which.

I have had a kind and charming letter from Madame de Metternich. I had been rather worried about my son's health and had written to her in my first moment of alarm. She did not laugh at my imaginary terrors; on the contrary, she replied in the most indulgent and friendly way. Do you know what touched her heart in my favour? A log which I had taken into Victor's room at Brescia, to make up his fire. What a good idea that log was!

The 24th.

Mr. Canning has forced the King to receive M. Jabot. So the King lets himself be bullied by him ; I should never have believed it. Jabot, the Minister of Liberal Spain, flung himself at the King's feet, kissed his hand, and then remained on his knees, not knowing that he ought ever to get up. While he was in this position, he pulled a great roll out of his pocket, much to the alarm of the King and Mr. Canning, neither of whom was prepared for the impromptu. It was an interminable speech. The King could bear no more and sat down ; the speech lasted a good quarter of an hour.

There is one thing which strikes me, and that is the private understanding between the Government and the Opposition. I have more than once heard remarks repeated that originated in Holland House ; and there I have encountered the same opinions on the same occurrences expressed in the same terms that Lord Liverpool or Mr. Canning had made use of the day before. They are all fraternising just now, and even the Radicals are in the family party.

The 25th.

I saw the Duke of York yesterday for the first time since his illness. He thought he was going to die. He is half the man he was and as weak as a cat—but not as regards his mind. What a good fellow he is ! You would have been pleased if you had heard him. “What has become of England,” he said, “since the death of our poor friend ? In his day, she was at the summit of her might and her glory, and now she is the protectress of the Radicals. The path had been marked out ; how could we turn aside from that noble course ? And here we are on the road to ruin. You remember what I told you about Mr. Canning ?” The poor Duke is anxious about everything. He is very much concerned

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MR. CANNING

about affairs in Ireland. He confided to me that, even here, he was not quite without subjects of alarm. One of the regiments of the Guards is Radical through and through : the officers are particularly distempered.

The 26th.

I am going to close my letter and leave it here, in case there is a chance of finding a courier ; for we are leaving the day after tomorrow for Brighton, where we are invited by the King. It will be very old when it reaches you, and I am annoyed to think that you will have to skip many passages which will be nothing but a repetition of what Paul sent you yesterday by one of my husband's couriers. It was a good opportunity for him, but of no use to me. I implore you to be more careful than ever about choosing your means of communication. Your Ambassador has heard that the French police are in possession of one of your letters to me, written a year ago at most.¹ I think it is one in which you made fun of France.

Brighton, March 1.

You were right ; I see that by treating him coolly, you have driven Mr. Canning to set his cap at you. You have been carrying on the kind of flirtation with him, which would be appropriate with a pretty woman. Perhaps that is what Ministers of the calibre of Mr. Canning are like. What will you do next ? Will you frown or smile ? I don't know your tactics in flirtation. You have never done me

¹ Certain letters from Madame de Lieven to Metternich were, in fact, intercepted and copied by the French police. These copies were published, during the present century, in the *Revue Hebdomaire*. They prove to be love-letters of the most ardent kind—written before the beginning of this series.

the honour of treating me as a pretty woman. I don't know if I ought to be offended or proud.

We came here yesterday, my husband, myself, my illustrious baby and my temperature ; for alas ! the latter is always with me. It is hoped that the change of air will do me good ; but I do not count on it much. The King is in excellent health. His legs are still weak ; but he looks healthier, and his temper and his appetite are better than I have ever known them. He found time to tell me in a whisper at table that all was going well or would improve ; that it was that which was restoring him to health ; that there was ill-feeling towards us, but that he was on his guard ; that, among other things, there had been an attempt to prevent him even receiving us ; that it was too much ; and that I, in particular, roused Mr. Canning's suspicions. All this was said rapidly, and in a low voice. He promised to explain at length. He said nothing at all to the Ambassadors, and did not so much as affect to care that he had not seen them for six months. We have with us the Duke of York, the Duke of Wellington and a few Cabinet Ministers. The Ambassador of the Netherlands was invited so that we should not be the only ones favoured. Wellington told me that he had just received a letter from Lord Fitzroy Somerset, informing him that Lord Holland, having learned from Canning of the steps the English Government were taking at Madrid to bring about changes in the Spanish Government, had on his side done all he could to thwart the plan ; and that he had succeeded so well that it was to his counter-influence that Fitzroy attributed the reverse he had encountered. Wellington showed the letter to Canning, who seemed thunderstruck at the discovery. I can imagine the look ; but I doubt its genuineness.

The 5th.

Everyone has left, and I am staying on. The King was tired of so many people. I suspect that the presence of Fagel¹ and Esterhazy rather embarrassed him. There was a consultation ; finally, it was agreed that, in order not to offend one, it was best to keep none. My husband sacrificed himself and left with his colleagues, and here I am alone. There is nobody here except the Conyngham family and Lady Cowper. We look as if we were settled here for ever, like the mandarin-figures on the walls.

The King spoke to me about you. I do not think he has got back to his old footing with Esterhazy. He is still suspicious, which prevents him from being as free as formerly. Whatever attentions he pays him are meant for his Court, and not as a personal favour. As for you, he is at least as fond of you as before. He sees his position and that of England very clearly and very correctly. He told me : "Our behaviour is double-faced, or looks as if it were, which is the same thing. We are never candid with anyone, and I am ashamed to think that a power like England should pursue the policy of a petty Court. I wish that we could make a clear and categorical statement, that we could say to everyone that we will never help Spain ; for that, decidedly, is our determination. The Order in Council revoking the ban on the export of arms, etc., was promulgated without my consent, without my knowledge even. The harm is done ; but, at least, I wish, I demand that it shall be satisfactorily explained to all the Courts. I wish us to remain neutral, and that, to this end, there shall be no gestures or speeches in favour either of the Right or of the Left." I got him to talk about Mr. Canning. He said : "I do not like him any better than I did. I recognise his talent, and I believe we need him in the Commons ; but he is no more capable

¹ The Dutch Ambassador.

of conducting foreign affairs than your baby. He doesn't know the first thing about his job : no tact, no judgement, no idea of decorum. But what is to be done ? Can I change my Minister ? No, for I should only get someone worse. That is the fix I am in. The best is bad ; but the worst would be hateful, and there is nothing in between. Wellington backs me. He thinks as I do, and I am entrusting him with the task of communicating to the Cabinet meeting (yesterday) my ideas and my wishes concerning the statement to be made. I am hoping that it will be adopted." He thinks of nothing else. The news from Spain about the events of February 19 and 20 engrosses him completely. He expresses himself very loudly and strongly about it, and in the right sense. The Duke of York entirely agrees with him, and even eggs him on, or begins to speculate on the chances. The King thinks that, if Ferdinand dies, the Duke of Orleans might be a candidate. Personally, I suggest one of the Neapolitan Princes ; everyone has his own candidate. These speculations are rather comic. The Duke of York said : "What about the House of Austria ?" In short, we are prepared to dispose of the throne of Spain. At least, that is what you would think to hear us.

March 14, 1823.

I have had some long talks with the Duke of York. He tells me that the Ministers are joining forces and that, between now and the first of next month, they will perhaps have got rid of their colleague. I don't go so fast. Lord Liverpool seems to me to be playing a double game with and against Canning. It is as well you should know that the Duke of York is gaining in importance. He is on the best possible terms with the King ; declared patron of Peel ; enemy, also declared, of Canning ; consulted by the Ministers and in-

formed of everything that takes place. The King, for his part, has become singularly moderate, plausible and discreet. He has one end in view, and he is working towards it like a wise man and with intelligence. Canning, who is more intelligent than anyone, may ruin himself by his indiscretion.

I have had a long and friendly letter from the Empress Dowager. She includes a whole page of compliments and pretty speeches made about me by the Emperor. I see from this that Verona, whatever you may have thought, was far from injuring me in his estimation.

The 15th. [?]

This post will be of interest to you. You can rely on it : decidedly, they are working to get rid of Canning. And, indeed, when I think of the numbers of honest folk who are scheming against him, and who they are—the King, the heir to the throne, all the Ministers and all their supporters, who, in fact, comprise the majority of the two Houses ; when I think that Canning's party consists of half a dozen fools, that his supposed popularity with the Opposition is a farce, and that he is so vain that he runs into traps like a blind man, I cannot help conjecturing that the efforts of the right side will be crowned with success. If the change takes place, I should imagine that Peel might be his successor ; but I am inclined to believe that Wellington is thinking of the post—however, it may be that he thinks alone.

The 19th.

The King has ordered the Duke of Wellington not to let a day pass without seeing Canning, and finding out what he is up to in his office. This embarrasses our friend. "Devil take me," he said, "that will get me into a row with Canning. I wrote to the King to tell him to be calm, that nothing

important could be done without my knowing it, but that a daily inspection would be embarrassing for me."

Lady Harrowby is one of my best friends just now. Like me, she is in a position that makes it impossible for her to say what she thinks about that charlatan in the Cabinet, even to those nearest her. She makes up for it in our private talks. She has the same opinion of Canning as I have. She knows a great deal about what is happening or is going to happen, and she is the woman with the most straightforward intelligence I have met. She always looks the truth in the face (you see that I am borrowing your phrases), while others look their passions in the face. That is why my friend is no use at the moment. She is too fond of her husband; and her husband is too fond of Mr. Canning. It seems to me that the Cabinet is just as dissatisfied with Lord Liverpool as with Canning. As for the King, you know of his former dislike of his Prime Minister. All the same, he will be a more difficult person to dislodge than the other.

The 21st.

The Duke of Wellington has been very ill again. He was bled. I saw him yesterday; he looks very poorly. The most interesting point I gathered from our conversation was his dissatisfaction with the promise that has been made to produce official documents in Parliament. "We have no right," he said, "to give away other people's secrets; and England has nothing directly to gain." He told me that last January war had been very near, and they had opened negotiations with the Netherlands to make sure of material assistance from that Power. He tells me things like this simply in the course of conversation. I make no comment; I do not look surprised, so that I never give him cause to think that it would be better for his own interests not to

confide in me. He regards me as a perfectly convenient and safe audience. He feels the need to talk, and he thinks there is nothing more natural than to tell me everything.

Brighton, the 28th.

I must regale you with the story of an extremely amusing scene that took place yesterday with the King. We attended a very small dinner-party; there were only the Conyngham family, Lord Bathurst and myself. After dinner, the King left the rest of the party and settled in a corner between Lord Bathurst and me; and, when he had drawn me as close as possible, he addressed me in the following terms: "I and my Minister are of the opinion that your Emperor is behaving magnificently in the Spanish affair. We approve his conduct absolutely. You may repeat this; but we are annoyed at the way in which the Duke of Wellington was pressed at Verona. He was put with his back to the wall. They ought to have had some regard for our position and for that of the Duke, and to have treated us with more consideration. Nobody understands our position better than Prince Metternich; but he understands it only when we are together. The moment he listens either to Bernstorff, or to any other leader of the Cabinet, he abandons the true point of view from which he should consider it. However that may be, I am very glad to be able to tell you, in the presence of my Minister, what I have told you a hundred times in private: that my Allies will always find me on the same path of rectitude, that I am Royalist to the core, and that I hold all the new doctrines in abomination. If M. de San Lorenzo¹ is presented to me, I shall speak to him only to ask: 'Sir, when are you leaving?' I hate and despise people who

¹ Spanish ambassador to France. When he visited England, he was received with great popular acclamation and the windows of the French embassy were broken.

carry bad taste to the length of asking him to dinner (Mr. Canning). Whatever may happen, I shall do my duty. So much the worse for those who don't support me, eh?"—this to the left, and a meaning look to the right, addressed to myself.

I must give you my reply, so that you can follow the thread.

"It is very precious to me, Sir, to hear from your own lips what you tell me about my Emperor. Your message will be doubly valuable to him, because it will show him that your sentiments and your views accord with his. I venture to disagree with you when you say that, at Verona, England's position was lost sight of; it was understood perfectly. What we wanted to know was, not what she thought—because the interests of this country are too much bound up with our own interests for us to believe that her Government does not share our views—but what she wished and was able to do. If the Duke of Wellington found himself in an awkward position at Verona, that seems to me to have resulted from one single fact: at Verona the Cabinets were assembled, and he is not a Cabinet in himself. That placed him in a position of inferiority which may have embarrassed him. As for your principles, Sir, we all rely on them; we know very well that, on no pretext whatsoever, would Your Majesty consent to a resolution that would actually constitute your Government the patron of the Radicals."

"What is that you are saying?"

"I was saying, Sir, that if—which I cannot believe—your Government let itself be drawn into the war, no matter what consideration of interest or policy prompted that decision, it would be none the less obvious that you were at the head of all the Jacobins in Europe. Surely, that would not be an ignoble part for a power such as England."

The King : "*There you have it. Have I not repeatedly told you the very same words ?*"

Lord Bathurst : "Yes, Your Majesty."

The King : "You saw, my dear, that the Ministers were obliged to do as I wished, and that they have declared our neutrality in Parliament."

I : "Yes, Sir, and let me tell you that none of us failed to recognise the author of that declaration. If your wishes had been followed six weeks earlier, much harm would have been avoided. But it is never too late to do the right thing."

The King : "Yes, but that is not all I wanted ; I wanted much more. It is as if I wanted to get possession of this table, and to make more sure of it I wanted to jump up on it, but instead were to fall down beside it. Do you follow me ?"

"Perfectly, Sir." (It is always best to follow reigning monarchs.)

Lord Bathurst coughed.

The King : "We have an abominable Constitution." (Lord Bathurst draws back his chair.) "I would rather be a shoe-black than a member of that odious Parliament." (Lord Bathurst draws back further ; the King makes him pull his chair forward, nearer to himself.) "But, if I were a private person, I should enter it solely with the aim of telling the truth. What do you think of none of my Ministers telling it ?" (Lord Bathurst's legs begin to fidget ; the King winks at me.) "And Lord Liverpool, what do they say about him ?"

"Sir, his speech on February 4 had a very bad effect. A speech intended to encourage the revolutionaries was bound to be very much deplored by us."

The King : "*There, Bathurst, you hear it.* In any case, Lord Bathurst thinks as you and I do."

"Sir, we are too accustomed to thinking highly of your

Ministers not to realise that the great majority of your Cabinet feels as Your Majesty does."

The King, turning to Bathurst: "*There, she pays you a compliment.*"

Lord Bathurst: "*Sir, she is right.*"

The King: "My dear, after all there is only one man in the world."

I: "No, Sir, there are two."

The King: "Ah, you know that I mean 'OR'?"

I: "Yes, and I mean Your Majesty." The King squeezed my hand—Bathurst did not know what that meant—then rose suddenly and took me by the arm. "Well, what do you think of this conversation? I wanted to show you how I treat my Ministers; and I wanted to show my Minister the footing I am on with you, eh?"

I: "Sir, I think I should like you to be King and Minister both at once."

In telling you this story, I have omitted all the common-places with which it was interlarded. The only essential point I have left out is this. The King, speaking of the circumspection which England's peculiar position demanded, added: "For, after all, she is not what she was; we cannot any longer give you soldiers or money. The national debt is enormous, and we cannot add a penny to it." Only at this juncture did Lord Bathurst nod his head rapidly and energetically and the end of his little *queue* worked round and tickled his ear. It was the only part of the speech that seemed completely to satisfy him. I was annoyed at having him as witness to such a scene. It was in every way unseemly. I told the Duke of Wellington so, adding that I hoped Lord Bathurst knew me well enough, and appreciated sufficiently the experience I had gained from a ten years' study of the country, to understand that I had taken what the King said in the right spirit and for what it was worth.

The 31st.

Thank you for telling me about my son. How kind Madame de Metternich has been to him ! Indeed, our families will soon be getting mixed up and we shan't know which are your children and which are ours. How is Pirony ? For you see that it is he who inspires me, and that I am quite one of your *household*. How is the scorpion-catcher, and the footman who began to cry when he said good-bye to me ? Tell the Prince de Ruffo not to forget me. I see the King every day. He has not been very well since yesterday ; but he sees us.

April 1.

Wellington again spoke of you a great deal yesterday evening, and of the necessity of coming to an understanding with you. He is not going back to London ; but he has written to Canning to tell him that absolutely he must induce you to explain what steps the Allies are going to take in the Spanish affair. Can they bear to see whatever government is established in that country—whether it be republican or Turkish—protected by France ? That would mean turning Spain into another Poland, and perhaps finishing her off in the same way. He added that the right moment for an understanding had come, and that the great Cabinets should boldly join forces to prevent France overwhelming Europe with her preponderant influence. I must confess that these high-sounding words made me laugh ; it seems to me that it will be a long time till we need tremble before the tremblers. However, this is the notion that preoccupies everyone here, especially Wellington. He cannot understand why, for a moment, you should delay clearing up the question and acting against France. He is urging Canning, for all he is worth, to make new and urgent overtures to you on the subject.

April 2.

Just as I was giving my packet to Esterhazy, my courage failed me. I remembered that he kept a letter from his master to the King of England two whole months in his drawer ; the thought of his aberrations frightened me, and I let him go empty-handed. I am casting about in my mind for a new way of sending off this letter. My friend was anxious to be of assistance ; but she loves her husband too much ; her husband loves Canning too much ; and I trust no-one's honesty. The Duke of York has just been announced ; he will do the job for me ; good-bye.

Brighton, April 3.

What effect do persistent annoyances have on you ? Would you take them as a warning, or would you treat a fortuitous series of accidents, all working the same way, as a mere nothing ? I have thought for a long time that you were a great man : since yesterday, I think I am a great woman.

Letters are never opened by the Post Office in England—at least, I am told, not inland letters. So my packet to you yesterday I boldly addressed to Neumann ; but, in order that my servants should make no mistake, I decided to carry it to the post myself, that is to say to put it in a box in the street. I set off at a time when I was certain of meeting nobody. I reached the office and found a large notice, announcing that it had been moved to another thoroughfare. I had no idea where to find it. I asked the first passer-by, who directed me to the other end of Brighton. When I got there, I asked again and found that I had to retrace my steps, and that the new office was just beside the old one. I thought they were making fun of me, especially as several passers-by began to laugh ; but, after a moment's reflection,

was in bed, and I did not see him. The weather is terrible, stormy and wet. I miss my two Ambassadors ; I liked having the arm of the one to lean on, and the absurdities of the other to make me laugh. He has such fits of gaiety that he disturbs the whole street. The King said to me the other day : "Look, isn't he like a monkey ?" ; and it was true. That grieves me ; for not many people know, or are willing to believe, that there are intelligence and good sense behind such manners.

The 4th.

My packet reached the Austrian Embassy intact. This confirms me in my contempt for presentiments and in my respect for the English postal service. There was enough in that letter to have had me hung, with universal applause.

The King is still in bed and sees nobody but his doctors. He has gout in both knees, the right foot, and the left wrist and elbow : that's all.

Everyone is very impatient and curious about the debates in the House of Commons on the 14th and the 17th—the first on England's political situation, the second on Irish affairs and the Catholic question. I fancy that these two sittings will decide the fate of Mr. Canning. The Opposition's game is to leave him a free hand to the end, and not to hinder him by any dispute, so as to be able to fall on him more effectively if his behaviour does not justify their hopes. As he is to explain his policy on the 14th, that will be the moment to judge. For the time being, this manœuvre has served the interests of the Government. They obtained without difficulty the sums necessary for all branches of the administration. So Mr. Canning has been the link between the Government and its opponents ; and the measure of popularity he has acquired with the latter has made him, to a certain extent, formidable

to his colleagues. But this unnatural truce cannot last, and a moment may come when the tool is no longer useful and is thrown away. That, it seems to me, is the crisis that is predicted between the middle of April and the 1st of May. His colleagues, meanwhile, are behaving with a great deal of circumspection and prudence; and their supporters have considerably increased in numbers. There is a sharp distinction between what is called the Government party and Mr. Canning's. That alone is enough to show how things are.

The 5th.

We have Lady Cowper and my friend with us. The former is charming, subtle, amusing and kind. The latter amuses me very much here; she takes no end of trouble not to let the King see that she is bored. However, she told me that she saw there was some use in an evening at the Pavilion: it helped one to decide whether one would enjoy eternity or no.

I do not see much hope for the King's journey on the Continent. He is in a deplorable state of health, either in bed or hobbling about on crutches. I have given up thinking about that chance of meeting you. Is there any other? I do not know what was said at the last interview between my husband and Canning; probably, it was the same thing—polite phrases and nothing really definite.

The 7th.

I return to my letter whenever possible; but what have I to tell you? A sick King, whom I have not seen for several days; a taciturn Minister; a great many members of the Opposition—that is what Brighton consists of. Yesterday, I dined at Lady Cowper's with thirteen members of the Opposition, half of whom I scarcely knew. Only English

was spoken, and I aired my entire English vocabulary. Really, the English are strange people ; and how clumsy ! I did not know my neighbour at table. He is a nobleman, who never leaves his country house. He did not dare to look at me when I spoke to him, though I could see from the movement of his eyelids that he was longing to see what kind of strange animal I was. After dinner, he assumed a position by the fireplace and began staring from behind a screen. Apparently, what he saw did not make him want to resume the conversation ; for he took his hat and went. Another felt sleepy and stretched himself out at full length on a sofa. That turned out well ; for in less than half a minute I heard him snoring. Can you see me in the middle of all this ?

The 13th.

The King cannot put his foot to the ground yet ; nevertheless, he is going to London this week. I shall have to go too, since he intends to hold a Court. Heavens, how I have come to detest his Courts and his receptions ! You need health to stand them, and an axe to grind if you are to enjoy them ; and I have neither interest nor health.

The 16th.

What a speech from Mr. Canning in the Commons, on the 14th ! The Ministers cannot work with him any longer. The imbroglio begins to get interesting. I am deserting the seaside in order to be able to attend and see what is happening. My relations are exactly calculated for that purpose. The Court, the Government, the Opposition, the Canning party—I have private sources of information in all those quarters. At Court, the King and his mistress ; in the Government, the Duke of Wellington ; in the Opposition, Lord Grey ; in the Canning party, Lady Granville. With all these re-

sources, I should have to be very stupid not to find out something.

I have had quite an affectionate letter from our friend Nesselrode. I cannot remember now what I said ; but it appears that a couple of lines from me served him as a résumé of my husband's voluminous report ; and he is enchanted to have found someone who can tell him so briefly what he wants to know. That sounds rather lazy ; or, to put it more respectfully, it sounds like a man who knows the value of time. He asks me for a couple of lines of the same sort by each post, and I shall send them. I like him very much. He is very open-hearted. I remember, almost with emotion, the little place I made for him between us, and how comfortably he settled down in it.

I have taken some trouble to find out about the structure of the Opposition. This is what I have learned. For three years they have never met to agree on any concerted action. This is because they have had no leader in the Commons, since Tierney resigned. During the actual crisis, the party felt the need of regulating its policy, and a meeting was called by Lord Duncannon (Chief Whip), a sort of party Chief of Police, that is to say the person who sends round circulars demanding the presence of Members in the House, when an important question is to be discussed. At this meeting, to which were invited all sections of the party—Hume and his followers, Lambton and his, Burdett, etc.—it was agreed to hold, every Wednesday, a dinner, presided over by each member in turn, in alphabetical order, to discuss what course was to be followed at the sittings. Thus, they will unite votes from all parts of the House, a thing which has not happened for a long time, through the extremists leaving the moderates in the lurch and *vice versa*, or walking out of the House when the motion was put to the vote. In short, the army corps is to operate as a body. I shall be

curious to see how it will work ; for example, Burdett, Wilson and Hobhouse want war at all costs, and Tierney wants peace at all costs.

London, the 18th.

Here I am back again. I have not seen anyone yet, and I have only my husband's account, which shows that he and his colleagues have taken Canning's speech very seriously. It was calculated to produce this effect. The Ministers are very dissatisfied with their colleague. He is a strange creature. Here is one of the things he did to Marcellin (the French Chargé d'Affaires) ; he persuaded him to come to hear his speech in Parliament, promising that he would be pleased. He met him in the lobby, as he was coming out of the sitting, and called out to him in front of everyone : "*Et bien, Georges Dandin ?*" Marcellin is rather a miserable specimen who has allowed himself to be bamboozled by Canning and covers himself by making indifferent jokes. But these whimsies, between a Cabinet Minister and a Chargé d'Affaires, are a pretty kind of diplomacy. I am longing to see all my confidants. I am convinced that the King must be furious with Canning. Yesterday, he nearly had a fight with Brougham ; and the House of Commons was on the point of putting them both under arrest. The scandal was avoided. But have you ever heard of a Minister who placed himself in such a position ? In any case, he is well on the way to doing what I expected—getting the Opposition against him, as well the whole Ministerial party.

The 20th.

The Duke of Wellington has been to see me. He is beside himself. He throws up his hands as high as our friend Nesselrode used sometimes to throw his, in moments of

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THE KING AND CANNING

despair. He tells me that his colleagues declare in a body that they cannot work with Mr. Canning. The King has refused to see him, and has written to advise him to remember that he is a Minister of the Crown. Canning was not abashed. Wellington told me that he was perfectly satisfied. Not so his party. My friend whispered to me yesterday that, taking everything into account, it might perhaps be better if Canning were out of office. The Opposition is delighted. Canning's position is curious. He is on bad terms with all the foreign Cabinets, with all his colleagues, with the Tory party, and, worst of all, with the Opposition, whom he imprudently boasted of having mastered. He has accomplished all this in two months' time.

How amused you would be if you were in London now ! I have never seen opinions and interests ranged in a more comical fashion. I am going to plunge into the crowd ; for so far I have only been in touch with isolated groups. Yesterday, I dined with Canning at the Austrian Embassy. I was put between him and Wellington ; they did not speak a word to one another. Canning asked me a thousand and one questions about the King. To him, the King is as remote as the man in the moon.

This morning, I went to call on the Duchess of Gloucester. She told me that she was with the King when he learned about the debate on the 17th and the altercation between Canning and Brougham. She had never seen him so upset. He felt that his Government was disgraced and degraded. Liverpool's behaviour baffled him completely. He said : "My Ministers want to start a revolution in England." What is very distressing is that there is really not one statesman in the entire Cabinet, and that, if one looks elsewhere, one sees only Radicals. Peel seems to me very timid, if not weak. Some people, however, look on him as quite capable of taking charge.

The 24th.

I told you about the letter of reproof that the King wrote to Canning, as a result of the sitting on the 14th. He has not seen his Minister since, except at the diplomatic reception the other day, when Mr. Canning thanked the King very deferentially for his kind epistle. The King at once told Wellington and laughed. Mr. Canning complains that the King showed favour at the reception to the French Chargé d'Affaires and the reverse to the Spanish Minister. Wellington says that the King did quite right. So you see what harmony prevails among the Ministers.

Mr. Peel, on his side, has just fallen out with the Grenville faction, which forms part of the Government. The division is ostensibly over the Catholic question ; and, although he has always felt the same, the breach has never been so obvious and so personal. Since the production of the official diplomatic documents in Parliament, the Duke of Wellington has become the object of unflattering public attention. They say that his despatches and his notes are pitiful. I told him long ago that Canning was trying to harm him and to make him a scapegoat : he finds him an uncomfortable mentor and keeper. This kind of relationship cannot last. There is not enough room for them both, and it won't be the haughtier one who will go. You cannot imagine what confusion there is in the Cabinet. Think of it : after having agreed at a Cabinet meeting and announced in Parliament that they were going to show all the documents relating to England's share in the recent negotiations about Spain, the Ministers suddenly found that they were in no way bound to make revelations of this sort in affairs that did not directly concern England's interests, and that to do so might even be a breach of confidence with regard to the other Powers. Wellington came and told me this. When I asked him why, in that case, they had published the documents, he said : "Because

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THE LIBERATION OF GREECE

we didn't think of it until we had promised." And these are statesmen.

The 26th.

Tom Jones is back, and with him came your long letter. How amusing it is the way our ideas agree ! You are so like me, you make me laugh ; probably, you think the same about me. We talk to each other about the same things ; we think the same way about them ; often I get your answer before I have asked the question. That ought to save me. But no ; I like you to realise sometimes that I am stupider than yourself.

Lord Grey assures me that he had great difficulty yesterday in not telling the House of Lords what he thought of them. He gives me the credit for his moderation.

The 29th.

The Duke of Wellington came yesterday to tell me about Maitland's impromptu move,¹ in inviting the Greek insurgents to place themselves under the protection of Great Britain. Lord Bathurst rejected the idea at once, and decided to dissociate himself immediately, and as definitely as possible, from Maitland's action. But a Cabinet meeting was necessary to decide. For ten days, Mr. Canning has been refusing to call it, and the Duke of Wellington is convinced that he is aware of his colleagues' opposition to Maitland's step and is evading the issue because he is in sympathy with the latter. The liberation of Greece was the dream of his youth ; and I am certain that he would glory in bringing it about. However, the Cabinet as a whole will not stand for fine sentiments. We shall witness a set-to.

The King had a scene with Mr. Canning about his speech

¹ Sir Thomas Maitland, governor of the Ionian Islands.

of the 14th. We shall see if the rebuke did any good. He is to speak this evening on the same question.

May 1st.

Mr. Canning is at the head of a triumphant majority of 352 votes. He will be above himself. However, he restrained his Radicalism ; and, except for a few intentional errors, on the whole he made a fine speech. Did you notice that he gave England the entire credit for having prevented a war between Russia and the Porte ? Aren't you going to put in a claim ?

The 3rd.

Really, our friend Wellington is going mad. Since yesterday evening, he has been all enthusiasm for the Spaniards and very cross with us. You are one of "us." He gave me a grand tirade on these lines yesterday ; there was everything in it, except common sense. Is it absolutely essential to lose one's wits in England ? Indeed, I am beginning to be nervous about mine.

May 3.

The King has had gout again since the day before yesterday ; he is in bed. The newspapers are trying to make out that he is mad ; I suspect Canning may have had a hand in it.

I read everything you sent to your Ambassador by Tom Jones. Your judgement of affairs at Verona has been confirmed by six months of experience. Your conjectures have become axioms ; you ought to be proud.

Wellington and Canning have been on cool terms for a fortnight. I think the latter gets tired of our friend wanting to meddle in everything. He is right in theory ; but this sudden outburst of animosity proves that he fancies himself

stronger. It is impossible for this Government to work as one ; their collaboration is fast reducing itself to a test of endurance. It is easier to believe that twelve of them will get rid of the thirteenth, than that the thirteenth will get rid of the other twelve ; but when I reflect how clever the unlucky number is, and how singularly second-rate are his dozen colleagues, I begin to be afraid that it won't be our friends who carry the day.

May 9.

I begin to perceive that I am made up of all the most contradictory qualities. I am active and lazy ; cheerful and melancholy ; brave and cowardly. I change with the wind. For ten years, I have been laughing at the English for attributing to the wind so much influence on their temper ; but I have now completely given way to that influence. If the wind is in the east, I am ill-natured and cross ; I feel angular, physically as well as morally. What is more, I register this wind from my bed just as accurately as do the little ribbons on Ruffo's chimney-pots. Today, I am giving a display of my bad qualities. Tomorrow, maybe, I shall wake up endowed with all my virtues. Perhaps I am making you suffer for my weathercock temperament ? Would it be better for you if I were to wait till tomorrow ?

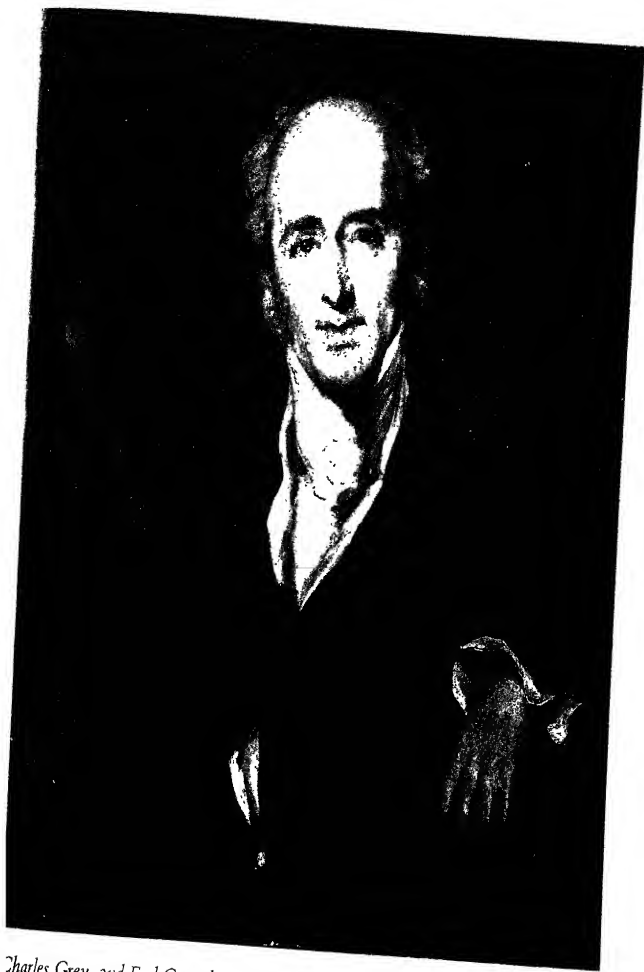
I am a little better. I go into society, that is to say I show myself and then turn on my heel. I take advantage of these short visits to discover whatever it is in my interest to find out. Usually, I divide my attention between the Duke of Wellington and Lord Grey and tell them to be quick. In general, everything has to be cut short to please me. Heavens, how much more pleasantly and how much longer one would live in society if everyone adopted that principle ! Lord Grey is very attentive to me.

Yesterday, I had a two hours' *tête-à-tête* with the Duke of

York ; unfortunately he does not know how much I can stand. He persists in his high principles and his presentiments of good. I like the principles, but I have not much faith in the presentiments.

The 13th.

I had an east wind yesterday ; I did not write to you so as not to display my bad temper. I went, in search of distraction, to the House of Lords. Lord Grey was very anxious for me to come ; I made my conditions and he kept to them ; he said nothing that might be unsuitable for me to hear. My appearance in the House created a sensation ; I never go there. I was put by the throne and found I was as conspicuous as the Chancellor. There was general surprise and curiosity. Lord Liverpool came to tell me that I had plenty of courage ; I replied that I had nothing but confidence, and that I had Lord Grey's word. He looked as if he did not believe that he would keep it ; but the sequel showed him he was wrong. I heard a two hours' speech by Lord Grey, and a reply of an hour by Lord Liverpool. At the moment when Lord Holland got up to speak, I got up to go ; this was noticed ; and the Duke of Wellington told me afterwards there was much whispering. I was delighted to underline the difference. I observed several things during the sitting. First of all, I see that there is coquetry in men just as there is in women ; and that it is as unbecoming to the former as it is to the latter. Lord Grey was being coquettish towards me yesterday. He did not speak as well as usual. Everyone remarked his embarrassment, and he admitted it to me himself. I fancy Lord Liverpool would not be sorry if I came to the House often. Liverpool showed no coquetry. Heavens, what attitudes he gets into ! All the same, he speaks well. He is not careful in the choice of his words, but he makes his points



Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, by Sir Thomas Lawrence

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LORD GREY

soundly. He speaks with force and clarity and one remembers what he has said. Lord Grey has the most beautiful diction in the world, the noblest pose, the purest and most elegant style. But his arguments sometimes struck me as false, and his conclusions as exaggerated. He spoke very ill of France. Lord Liverpool defended her discreetly and, in general, did not compromise himself for the love of anyone. Lord Grey extolled the joys of peace. He does not like our principles, etc., and that is all twaddle. I did not dine till six in the evening and slept badly as a result. That is what comes of letting oneself be ruled by Lord Grey.

The 15th.

The King has had a relapse. He has erysipelas on the foot and a high temperature. Poor King, what a sad life he leads ! How I should mourn him if he were to die ! Politically, everything would go on just the same, except for Mr. Canning, who would be dismissed on the spot. The Duke of York is quite as attached as the King to the Alliance and the principle of the Alliance. He has—which is more than the King has—a very decided will, almost amounting to obstinacy. He would be more difficult to serve than his brother because he is far less tractable. He is undoubtedly less intelligent than the King ; but he has good sense and integrity.

So you are fifty today. You know what I think about this subject ; so don't be surprised if I congratulate you sincerely on reaching that age. How glad I should be to be fifty ! Then I should know that I had as much intelligence as it lay within my power to achieve.

The 19th.

Your Ambassador has gone back to his former manner, coldness, suspicion, I don't know what. He has not spoken

to me for several weeks. What a strange creature he is ! Here is a small example. Wellington gives him a paper and asks him to show it to my husband, and then to let him have it back. He keeps it, does not show it, and sends it back, saying that he has made use of it as agreed. Wellington asks me what my husband thinks of it. "Nothing, since he has never even heard of it." The Duke was all astonishment. I asked him to say nothing to Esterhazy, but not to trust him for the future in such matters. My husband bears him no grudge ; but anyone else would regard it as a very dirty trick. However, the paper was passed on to me and I have just sent a copy to my husband, who has gone to Brighton for a few days. It is a report from an English officer, who went to Seville full of enthusiasm for the constitutional cause and came back thoroughly disillusioned. This is the gist of the letter :—"The most contemptible nation, the most despicable government of ignoramuses and fools." In short, he has no words strong enough to express his scorn. He reports that the French army is fine and well disciplined, welcomed by the people and much better treated by them than the English army ever was, but pretty impatient to get out of that wretched country ; and that a few English agents are circulating a pack of lies and doing incalculable harm to the good cause.

The 20th.

I have received your No. 143. Heavens, what an adventure—that white packet falling just in front of you ! What a terrible thought—three steps, or half a second, between life and death ! I am still frightened as if the dead man were beginning his fatal leap all over again, and as if you were in the place of the old woman. So it is not only the English who have the privilege of playing tricks like this.

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NEWS FROM WELLINGTON

Wellington, whom I saw, had no news to give me. He was waiting impatiently for your reply, which by now he will have had. I see from what you say that I guessed right. I suppose he will show it me, unless his pride prevents him. However, you know men well enough to have been careful not to wound him in his weakest spot—his vanity. Heavens, they are made of it—the clever man, the fool, every man has his share, and Wellington, who is a bit of both, has a double portion. How nice it would be, one day, to meet a man who did not mind saying : “I was wrong” !

May 21.

Wellington came this morning to show me his letter from you. He also read me a few remarks he had written in the margin. The only one worth mentioning is this : “If Prince Metternich sees so great a danger in letting the Spanish revolution go unpunished, why did he think of it so late in the day ? Now, he constantly urged Lord Londonderry to join him in preventing the Emperor Alexander from putting into practice his repressive ideas about Spain.” These remarks, written in pencil on your letter, will remain private ; he will not make use of them unless circumstances demand it. He will send you a simple acknowledgment. He does justice to many of your ideas ; but there are points which do not meet with his approval, because, having once opposed them at Verona, he feels himself bound in honour to continue to oppose them. In his heart, he thinks very much as you do ; for he is an Ultra to his finger-tips. At the passage in your letter in which you insist on the punishment of the instigators of the military revolt, he exclaimed : “. . . Yes, I should have them all hanged.” He made several exclamations of the same kind which amused me very much. The reason he is determined not to make use of your letter just

now, and not to answer you in full, seems to me his bad relations with Canning. If he had a success to show, he would display it ; but nobody boasts of a dream, or something like a dream, especially to an enemy. That is what his attitude to Canning seems to me to be just now.

The Duke of York is the only one who still maintains that the King's health gives no cause for anxiety. Wellington told me that he did not give him eight months to live. I am inclined to think the same. I notice many arrangements being made in the Marchioness's household that look as if she were taking precautions. It is a fact that, since January 6, the King has not enjoyed an hour's health, and often, for three or four weeks at a time, has been very ill indeed. At sixty-two, one does not get over such attacks, especially with a complete lack of air and exercise. All eyes are on the Duke of York. The Opposition are furious, for they have nothing to hope from his reign. He concerns himself with affairs and goes into them far more deeply than he used to do. Every time he sees me he asks me questions. I find that he keeps always to the same wise and commendable point of view.

The 25th.

I feel far from well again. Can I be going into a decline ; is it that I am merely bored ? All the same, it would be stupid to die of boredom. I shall become absolutely useless to you, at this rate. Nothing excites or amuses me ; which is a very bad sign. Europe and society go on without me ; I no longer enquire what is happening. What will you say to my letters ? It will no longer be worth your while to await them impatiently, as once you used to honour them by doing.

There is a great commotion in the Conyngham family.

The eldest girl has found a suitor : the Duke of St. Alban's, excessively aristocratic, a descendant of one of Charles II's natural sons, a perfect fool and not very rich. The King wants the marriage, the girl not so much ; the public laughs. I was consulted, and was fortunate enough to be able to explain that I did not know the suitor even by sight. On principle, I never approve or disapprove of a marriage ; either way, one is wrong.

The 29th.

The Duke of Wellington, with whom I had a long talk this morning, seems very downcast. He sees that they are managing without him now. I am able to tell him about things done at the Foreign Office of which he knows nothing. He is not only on cool terms with Mr. Canning, but on very bad terms with Liverpool too. He has seen Toreno and advised him frankly to accept the "Re Veto,"¹ "because," he went on, "whatever you may be aiming at, believe me that you will have to put up with him since the Allies wish it." I do not know if that is the advice which Canning and Liverpool give to Spain. Wellington told me that France had been beginning to assert herself in the last few days, and that he was convinced that she intended to lay down the law to everyone, or to bamboozle all the Cabinets. My personal belief is that Canning wishes to break up the Alliance and to create a European Constitutional party, of which he would be head. It accords both with his principles and with his vanity. Poor Wellington, who prophesied that 300,000 men and three hundred million (francs ?) would not be sufficient to subdue Spain ! There is not one of his predictions which has not been confounded by the event ; but only yesterday he said to me : "Well, you see that everything is happening just as I told you." What vanity !

¹ The King of Spain.

June 2.

I see the Duke of Wellington every day, and every day I am more and more convinced that he counts for nothing in affairs.¹ For some weeks, he has known nothing about them. He feels it, though he tries to put a good face on it. The intimacy between Liverpool and Canning is growing.

June 3.

Since yesterday, Wellington and Canning have again been on speaking-terms; but the latter speaks only to tell the former what he had heard from me three weeks ago. Wellington has written to Alava to offer him an *aide*. In general, the Spanish affair is considered as over. It is surprising how easily these English, who are so deliberate and so thoughtful, get excited and discouraged. My opinions are always definite. This time I wish that they were right; but it seems to me that there is a long way to go before the job is done.

The Duke of York gives me from time to time his views on the situation. He is a useful informant. This is his opinion. Although the present session has apparently been of advantage to the Government, since their measures have been carried without hindrance, actually it has considerably weakened their prestige, in so far as it has become obvious to everybody that they are divided among themselves. The Ministers no longer stand by one another in debate; the result is that their adherents hesitate to support them, and, one by one, are deserting for fear of being compromised. In the Cabinet, the split is more marked than ever. Lord Liverpool and Canning are on one side, all the rest of the Ministers on the other. The latter want to get the position clear; and, as soon as the session is over, Mr. Peel, the

¹ From this point, it will be noticed that a very definite change takes place in Madame de Lieven's attitude towards the Duke of Wellington.

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AT WINDSOR

Chancellor, Lord Bathurst and the Duke of Wellington will insist on having it out. What I hear from the Duke of Wellington fully confirms the Duke of York's reports of the weakening of the Minister's Parliamentary support ; and this is entirely due to the behaviour of Mr. Canning, whose duty it is to act as the mouthpiece of the Government in the Commons and defender of all Government measures. He evades discussion ; and, when he is compelled to speak, far from defending his colleagues' actions, he betrays them to please the Opposition. Now the Opposition appear to despise him, so that he fails in his object, and is behaving now just as he behaved in the Spanish affair.

The 12th.

I have had four long days at Windsor. The country air would have done me good, if its effect had not been spoilt by having to spend five hours each morning stuck in a grandstand watching the races. The public did not expect the King to appear, as they thought he was dying or mad. He was received with a good deal of enthusiasm. His health is better, but not his legs. He told me a somewhat amusing story about a discussion, or rather an argument, he had with Canning on the subject of Spain. It is too long to reproduce ; and, anyhow, it is nothing new. Canning is afraid of the "Re Veto," afraid of France, afraid of Parliament. The King said there was nothing to be afraid of. Canning insisted that Prince Metternich wanted to rule the whole world, to wipe out every constitution from the surface of the globe. "No harm in that," said the King, "so long as our constitution is among them."

The King summoned me to a conference between him, his mistress and his chief doctor, Sir Henry Hallford. It concerned the arrangements for his journey. The doctor

was for Carlsbad. Then the question cropped up where Carlsbad was ; which way to go ; how long the journey would take—I laughed till I nearly died. The lady thought they would have to go through Vienna ; the King scoffed at her ignorance and insisted that they would go by the Tyrol. Both are longing to make the trip—but the Ministers !

The 17th.

The parties are in a great state of excitement here. Subscriptions for the Spaniards, and the ball organised on their behalf by Lady Jersey, make so many bones of contention in social life. The fact is that the whole thing is merely laughable. A great nation, which can find no better way of showing its enthusiasm and its sympathy for another nation than by collecting a few guineas for entry to a ball, is really a ridiculous spectacle. To that the reply is : but look at the moral effect ; all the great names in England at the head of the organisation ! So much the worse for the great names. Spain may get honour out of it, but she gets very little else ; and what the great names actually contribute is a mere pittance.

The 20th.

England is like the bottom of the sea just now ; not a scrap of news. Nothing direct from Lisbon. If, as the French newspapers say, the counter-revolution there came off on the first of June, why, on the 20th, have we not yet had the news, when sometimes we get it in five or six days ? Not a word from Seville either. Nothing would amuse me more than if the Spanish business were to peter out before a certain subscription ball, whose organisers, in any case, are already ashamed of it. Lord Grey laughs at it heartily. The Londonderrys are sulky with me ; and I fancy they intend openly to join the ranks of the Opposition. It is

obvious that Londonderry is only looking for an excuse. He has just asked for his pension. But it is given only in cases of necessity, and he has been refused ; he complains bitterly of injustice and ingratitude.

The Duke of Wellington grows stupider every day. It is incredible what rapid progress his malady makes in his brain. You can no longer argue with him about anything. He is always good-natured and well meaning, but no more than that.

The engagement of Lady Conyngham's daughter is broken off. The young man was such a fool and booby that the family would never produce him. Recently, the King had him to the Cottage. He spent his mornings in the stable ; I fancy that finished it. All the same, he was very much in love ; for which you don't need brains. I should not be surprised if this incident became another incentive to the journey.

The 23rd.

I dined yesterday with the Government ; today, we are having the Opposition to dinner. I do not know which of them amuses me most ; but I do know that neither side dislikes me. Yet I must confess that, if I had to choose, my pride would not induce me to prefer the Government.

The wind has been from the north-east for the last three weeks. Everybody is ill. The packet-boats do not arrive. The weather is foggy and cold. Heavens, what a sky England has !

By the way, I really think Lord Grey is going mad. He told me the other day that he would like to kill himself. I replied that it was no new thing for an Englishman, but that it was new for a clever man like himself. "Cleverness," he said, "is beside the point when one is no longer young."—"Then it is because you are no longer young that you want

to kill yourself? That certainly is an original reason." What is the man thinking of? Has he been seized by a romantic passion? Really, I should be sorry if he made me laugh at him; for I enjoy his company.

July 5.

Yesterday, I was with three women, two of them clever, the third stupid, all three "engaged." The topic of conversation was my health. The stupidest gave it as her opinion that I should be better if I were to indulge in some perfectly innocent little affair of the heart. The motion was passed unanimously. I said their arguments were very reasonable and promised to think of it next season, that is to say in the spring of '24, since for this season it was already too late. They did not like that "too late"; besides, they thought, looking at me, that "too late" might apply to next year rather than to this. So they began, quite naively, to go through a list of a few fashionable gentlemen who were, they said, not at all inclined to think it too late. I was prepared with an objection to each of them. Finally, I said about one that he was very good-looking, but that I thought his eyes were too light. Unfortunately, his eyes are extremely dark; and there were peals of laughter. In the end, they agreed to give me up. The dear women, they are so pleased with their little conquests, that it's a pleasure to watch them. I like seeing happiness in any form. They laugh at me; well, I do not laugh at them.

The Opposition look askance at me for two reasons: firstly, because I think and speak differently from them; secondly, because I have some kind of influence over their leader (Lord Grey). It is true that, for some little time, he has retired from affairs. He goes out of town as soon as there is any question of a debate in the Lords. He has made fun of the Spanish ball, and did not give a halfpenny to the subscription.

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DINING WITH THE KING

He says openly that the Spanish affair is over ; in short, he says and does everything that most annoys his party. I do not know whether I deserve the credit ; but I know I have not taken much trouble. I am too bored and cross and ill to take trouble over anything.

The 11th.

I dined with the King yesterday. Our two Ambassadors were there and a few Ministers, Canning among others. The Prussian Minister and the French Chargé d’Affaires were invited for the evening, but not another soul from the Diplomatic Corps, so the party was exclusively Alliance. Canning was extremely vexed. The King gave the impression that he had invited him only to humiliate him. At dinner, we were talking about Alava, and Wellington said he was a finished man. “Yes,” said the King, “and that is because he never took sides boldly.” (The instance was badly chosen ; but, never mind, the intention was good.) “There is nothing more contemptible and clumsy than half-measures and half-tones. I hate them. *Don’t you, Mr. Canning ?*” Canning did not answer a word, and we all dropped our eyes. The King was on his best behaviour yesterday, full of friendliness and attentiveness towards me. He asked me not to make any plans during the next few days, because he was still thinking about his trip and he would like me to be of the party ; and then he enquired : “What would you say if I were to go and spend the winter in Milan ?” You can imagine what my answer was. It is all very much in the air ; but who knows ? . . . Parliament rises in a few days, and he will be able to follow his inclinations more freely. I do not want to make friends with Canning, in spite of all the advances that he makes to me ; otherwise, if I were to let fall a single word, he would be on our side. I need only secure

him the King's favour, as a reward for his efforts to advance the journey, and the thing would be done ; but I shrink from taking a step that would tie me to him for months.

The 18th.

Parliament will be prorogued today or tomorrow. It is difficult to believe that, after the House rises, there will not be important changes in the Government. Latterly, the Ministers have been making a scandalous exhibition of the marked differences of opinion that exist among them. They alone come to grips in Parliament, particularly in the House of Lords. Lord Liverpool is on the side of the Opposition in all domestic questions. The majority of the Ministers follow him. On the other side, there are only the Chancellor and the Duke of Wellington. The Duke of York votes regularly with them, and nearly always gives them a majority over the rest of the Cabinet and the Opposition. That shows the superiority of the former Government party, as personified in the Chancellor, since he can defeat the two parties together. The secret of this extraordinary state of affairs is that Mr. Canning completely dominates Lord Liverpool, who no longer thinks or moves without his consent. Now, Canning would like the Chancellor to fall for several reasons. The first is that he is his inveterate personal enemy ; he is the only one who would never consent to Canning's entry into the Cabinet ; the second is that, if Canning could overthrow him and a few of his nominees, he would be able to make appointments to those posts and would put in men of his own party. The Duke of Wellington is absolutely furious. The other day, I saw him arriving from the House of Lords at a dinner-party which I attended, and heard him say, in front of about twenty people of all parties : "*My Lord Liverpool is neither more nor less than a common prostitute.*" He was

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MATTERS PERSONAL

so angry that he forgot that he was speaking in front of women. He muttered a few words of apology ; but, although everyone began to laugh, he remained serious, red and angry.

Richmond, July 27.

For a week my heart and eyes have refused to write to you. I have been overwhelmed by my loss. It took me by surprise, as if my father had not been old and infirm, and as if in the natural order of things he ought not to die before me. After twelve years' separation, it has affected me more than if I had been always at his side. He always loved me more than his other children. He asked for me ; he wanted to bless me again—it is irreparable, that is the real misery. This will be a grief to me for many a day. My dear old father !

July 30, 1823.

My husband saw Lord Liverpool yesterday and delivered all the messages with which he had been charged about his speech. Lord Liverpool listened in silence. Afterwards he tried to justify himself by protesting that it had never entered his head to say anything personal about our two Emperors ; that he had the greatest confidence in them ; that he had meant only to speak of principles and not of individuals. It was a very long interview. The impression left on my husband is that Lord Liverpool is much more disposed to be conciliatory than he was a few months ago ; and, on the whole, he is quite satisfied. It is noticeable that people always become more conciliatory when Parliament is not sitting. A Minister hardens his heart in February, and by April it is like a rock. So we still have six months of affection in front of us.

The doctors announced yesterday that I must have a few months in a warm climate. That would look well—going

off by myself to chase the sun ; and what a bore ! Indeed, I have a good mind to leave off my legs and try to live without them ; since it is all for the love of my legs that I am being sent.

They make strange marriages in England. Lord Fitzwilliam, who is 76, married last week Lady Ponsonby, who is 72. People laughed, and then thought they were right. "*After the ceremony, the happy pair set off for their country seat to pass the honeymoon.*" We won't say anything about the church service ; but *honeymoon* is too much. Yesterday, Lord Sidmouth, who is 68, married a young person of 50. Nobody laughed ! That is quite young.

London society has practically dispersed. There is nobody left for me but my friend. I don't know what I shall be doing in a few days. The doctors advise me to do anything that comes into my head. Good advice, if one could follow it. I will let you know presently what comes into my head.

August 1.

A remarkable little manuscript has fallen into my hands. It was lent me by someone to whom Sir Hudson Lowe gave it to read ; he, in his turn, had taken it from Bonaparte's private library at St. Helena. It is dated 1668 ; and the paper, ink, style and orthography confirm the date. One can only suppose that the narrator was a Frenchman of some distinction at the Court of Charles II in London. By chance, he was present, secretly, at an after-dinner conference between four members of the British Cabinet on the question as to whether they ought to take part in the war between Spain and France ; which side they ought to join ; or whether they ought to declare themselves neutral. Every word of the discussion is applicable to Spain today ; it is very interesting. I wish I could show you this little book. How delighted Canning would be ! I am sorry to have to tell you that, finally, the

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SUBSCRIPTIONS TO SPAIN

English Ministers decided in favour of Spain. Yesterday, Wellington showed me a letter from Cheltenham : "If the Spaniards have the means to make one lucky stroke, they will succeed." Putting to flight a hundred thousand Frenchmen, from Corunna to Carthagená, and from the Eastern Pyrenees to Cadiz, is a little too much.

The King has given up the idea of all journeys on land or sea. That is how his great plans always end. Good-bye ; do not worry about the money Spain will receive from English sympathisers. The famous subscription, which was heralded with such pomp and supported by such fine speeches, produced in the whole United Kingdom only £9,000. An anonymous donor, suspected to be Eugène Beauharnais, added £5,000. And that is all.

Windsor, the 9th.

I have been established here for the last two days. The place is very low and damp. It rains in torrents. The suite we are using is a little beneath the level of the garden, and the field-mice come in boldly and run about the rooms. The first day, a few members of the Royal Family were here. Since yesterday, we have been alone, the Conyngham family, my husband and myself. The King is well ; but he limps and weeps. We spend the mornings out-of-doors. Right and left, he is cutting down the laurels that he planted two years ago, and the oaks that were planted two centuries ago. There is nothing sadder than to see these venerable trees coming down : three blows with an axe, and it is all over. My little boy is the only one who finds it amusing ; it makes me cry. The day before yesterday the King received the Prince de Polignac. Mr. Canning was present according to custom. The King kept them to dinner. When we rose from table, he led the conversation round to Fouché. "Instead of taking him for my Minister, as the King of France has done,"

he said, "I should have hanged him, and eighty other rascals with him; that is what I should have done with those Jacobins." Polignac pretended to look embarrassed, but was really delighted. He was much more so, when the King said: "What an admirable speech M. de Chateaubriand made in reply to all the nonsense that was talked here! What good taste! We admired it greatly, didn't we, my dear?" Canning made no movement; but he must have been edified. You cannot imagine how embarrassed he looks in these surroundings. He must feel very ill at ease, to cling to me as if I were his only saviour. He talked to me a great deal about Esterhazy. In his last interview with him, before he left, he seems to have found out what he was worth. He thinks he is shrewd. He told me that Polignac was just a fool.

The 11th.

The Marquess of Hastings came here this morning. The King treats him as if he were a creditor. He seems to me to be not a clever man, but a most honourable man. He reminds one more than anyone of Don Quixote—his features, his figure, his dress. He has been offered the post of Ambassador in Naples. He wants the Ionian Islands or Venice; but he cannot have either. He is leaving England because he is deeply in debt.

The 12th.

Yesterday evening, the King began to sing. In order to produce the sole musical sound of which his throat is capable, he closed his eyes, shed tears; and this is what happened. A Lysander is addressing a Thaïs:

To thee, to thee
I pledged my troth—

accompanied by an old French air. I stifled my laughter. Does it ever overcome you, as it overcomes me ? I really thought I should die, especially when I saw how affected the courtiers looked at the sight of the Royal tears.

I will give you a little example of the way affairs are carried on here. At dinner, the King received a letter telling him of the death of the Marquess of Cornwallis, Master of the Buckhounds. When we left table, Lady Conyngham told me to name the person to whom I considered the King should give the post. I thought she was joking. "Not at all," she said, "today we can give it to whom we like. I have nobody in view in whom I am interested ; and if you name someone it will be done this evening ; for tomorrow Lord Liverpool will have a candidate to propose to the King, and it will be too late." You can imagine that I persisted in regarding it as a joke. But, indeed, at lunch this morning the King received a letter from Lord Liverpool soliciting the post for Lord Maryborough, a member of the Cabinet. Yesterday, I might successfully have annexed Lord Liverpool's rôle.

The 13th.

The affair I told you about yesterday is taking a serious turn. Canning is at the bottom of it. He and Liverpool are suggesting that the King should give the post of Master of the Buckhounds to Lord Maryborough in order to get him out of the Cabinet. He is in it now as Master of the Mint. The King at once saw the proposal in its true light. He said to me : "If this member of the Cabinet resigns, I wish the number of members to be reduced, and I wish, moreover, that it shall not be done without the approval of the Duke of Wellington." Now it is obvious that Canning wants to give the place to one of his friends so as to increase his party in the Cabinet. The King has just sent a messenger to the

Duke, who is at Cheltenham, to consult him. He asked me to write to him as well. I wrote, merely asking him to keep a friend for us, if only to preserve us from an enemy. By the way, the King has had a letter from Londonderry requesting to be made Master of the Buckhounds. He takes it as a matter of course that everything falls to his share. It is equally a matter of course that he won't get what he has asked.

Yesterday, the King enquired what I thought of affairs in Spain. I replied that I did not like things that dragged on ; but that, all the same, I was convinced that, with perseverance, we should win the day. He then remarked that King Ferdinand was a serious hindrance, and that the best thing to do would be to pronounce him incapable and give the throne to his brother. I looked at him with astonishment : "By what right, Sir ? and can it be you who want to upset the legitimate succession ?"—"No, that is true," he said, "but all the same it would remain in the family." What an argument ! In the end, he took back what he had said and told me I was right.

The Cottage, August 14.

This is the way I spend my life here. I get up at nine, and go straight out into the garden. After I have dressed, I go at eleven o'clock to luncheon with the King. We talk till one. From one till two is the only time I have free. From two till four, we go for a drive in an open carriage, or go on the river, or go out some way or another. After that, half-an-hour to dress, and then dinner. After dinner, the piano ; after the piano, *écarté* ; and, at twelve, to bed. Occasionally, the conversation is interesting ; but, usually, it is so stupid that one begins to doubt one's own intelligence. I look into my mind and, honestly, I find nothing in it ; if you were to beat me you would not get a sensible idea out of

me. I was reflecting yesterday that there were better ways of spending an evening, and I remembered Verona. At this moment, I looked up : the King was gazing at Lady Conyngham with an expression in which somnolence battled against love ; Lady Conyngham was gazing at a beautiful emerald on her arm ; her daughter was toying with a ruby hanging round her neck ; and I, the fourth member of the party, swathed in my melancholy black crêpe, I felt my heart as full as my head was empty. I was very close to tears.

The 16th.

Really, if this continues much longer, I shall go out of my mind. Yesterday, at table, we were all so stupid that I quite forgot my manners. When I am really bored, I laugh at anything. So, at grace, after the first glass of sherry, when everyone is supposed to be silent, I was seized with an uncontrollable fit of laughter. The daughter, who is always ready to laugh, caught it from me, and old Admiral Nagle could not contain himself. Fortunately, he upset a bottle, which gave us an excellent excuse to go on laughing, and even get worse. The King was angry. He thought we were laughing at him. I did not mind ; for the moment I was beyond caring. He could not scold me, so he scolded the daughter. Afterwards, we played fourteen games of écarté and thirty-three games of patience.

The 18th.

It seems to me that Mr. Canning is beginning to envisage the need of adopting a new line of policy. He thought that France was at a low ebb, and the expedition to Spain on the eve of a complete set-back. All his pleasant illusions are being shattered. My husband had a long conversation with him yesterday, and drew him a picture totally different from

what his rich and radical imagination had represented to him up till now. Canning listened eagerly, but not despondently. He thanked my husband for his ideas and for his accompanying observations on England's position. He agreed that this completely changed the look of things, and that it was a question of adopting a different attitude—that is to say, of taking an active part in the new arrangements which would be made in Spain. Will his part be to arrange or to upset? We shall see.

Tomorrow I am going to Tunbridge. It is thought that the air there will do me good; I will try it.

Brighton, August 20.

I spent only one night at Tunbridge, and that in a bath rather than in a bed. The rain was torrential. My room was damp. The only dry thing I found in the whole of Tunbridge was Lord Grey. You know he is more like a herring than a man. He must have been very bored; for I never saw a man more distressed than he was when I determined to leave. Tunbridge is the most picturesque place imaginable. Charles II held his gallant Court there. He chose well; but I suppose that, in his day, the summers were worth calling summers, and that his beauties did not go to bed in the water as I did. I felt it would be very little use going back to London, so I came on to Brighton, and here I am. I let my husband know, and he is coming to join me. As usual, I have my faithful baby. I found some kind of sunshine here—the kind you see on a cloudy day in Italy.

The 23rd.

I see that you like Lady Georgina Wellesley (Lady Cowley); I can imagine that you would. She has plenty of good sense. We have never been very intimate; but we were

always good friends. She is said to like gossip. I have never found out if she deserves the reputation. I am so far from having that fault, and generally I am so quickly bored with trivialities, that it is rare for anyone who is endowed with a little tact not to realise immediately that this is the kind of conversation I like least. So she might well be a gossip without my knowing it. She has given you a garbled and abridged version of the mischievous stories Lady Jersey tried to spread about me ; and Lady Jersey has the most dangerous tongue I know. I will not bore you, and myself, with the whole truth ; but I cannot leave you under a false impression. Here is what happened in the end. She wanted to have it out. There was no way of escaping. She talked and wept for an hour on end. The sound of her voice and her vulgar way of talking upset me so much that I felt almost sea-sick ; incidentally, I was quite incapable of understanding what she was trying to say. So, to be done with it, I said : "Tell me, in a word, if you have come to make peace. If so, I am ready ; if you have come to declare war, I accept the challenge." That brought on a fit of hysterics and frightful reproaches for my coldness. "Is it possible to say such freezing things to one's friend ?" In the end, I really believe I drove her out, for I was beside myself. So here we are friends or enemies, just as she likes ; for, once again, it doesn't matter to me, so long as I am left in peace.

The 24th.

I see from your despatches that England annoys you, that her policy irritates you : it is no use hoping for a change. Her domestic prosperity justifies her behaviour. Never was the country so happy and peaceful as England at the moment. The lower classes live in plenty. Trade flourishes. The nobility wallow in the lap of luxury. If anyone thought of

complaining, people would laugh in his face. I have lived in this country for eleven years, and for the first time I hear no grumbling. If one looks back to the last two years, when whole counties were in open revolt, one has to admit that the present state of things offers a striking contrast. The National Debt is being reduced ; taxes are being abolished. Bread is cheap. Why has all this happened ? I don't know. We do not like their foreign policy ; but what does John Bull mind ? He has his mug of beer. And what do the Ministers mind ? They are at peace among themselves. The account that I give you is absolutely accurate.

A messenger has reached my husband who happened—I don't know how—to spend three days in Cadiz. He saw the King on the roof of his house, flying a kite. The whole of Europe is precipitated into alarms and excursions for a King who flies a kite. Why doesn't he have a court-fool to amuse him ? If Ferdinand had any sense, he would be forgiven that kind of recreation ; it would even be thought quite original. But it is equally true that, if he had any sense, he would not be in Cadiz against his will.

The 29th.

All you say about Lord Grey is perfectly true. Ambition is what keeps him alive and struggling ; but he will never be a Minister. He eats too many sweets. That is what Lady Cowper told me, and it is a very sound reason. He is bilious ; his impaired digestion, which makes him so ill-tempered, ruins all his chances. He still writes to me in the firm conviction that the Spanish revolutionaries will emerge from the struggle victorious. I am sick of Spain. Shall we never hear the end of it ?

I fancy that Lady Georgina's success with you is attributable to the fact that she has a direct intelligence and a frank

manner ; and with Viennese society to the fact that she is not good-looking. It is remarkable how kindly one feels towards a foreigner who is not beautiful, when she occupies the position of Lady Georgina. Giving way in point of precedence is one thing ; giving way in point of beauty is quite another.

I have been taking a complete course of Shakespeare since I have been at Brighton. What disorder, and what truth ! After him, everything seems stupid. Open his works at hazard. Wherever you look, you are sure to find genius. I admire him so much that I should be quite put out if, in one of his tragedies, he had not shipwrecked his heroes on the "sea-coast of Bohemia."

September 6.

You will be amused to read, in the English papers, that the Duke and Duchess of San Lorenzo are having a lawsuit with a dressmaker. The Duchess owes her twenty-five shillings, and will not pay it. The Duke was so angry that he beat the poor woman ; the Duchess had the ingenious idea of giving her two pairs of old shoes in settlement of her debt. All this is being gravely explained before the magistrate at Marylebone ; and His Highness the Duke gives evidence in court.

The 11th.

I appear lazy ; but really I am only stupid. Why should not that be a regular disease ? For those who become stupid, when they were not born so, it is just as much of an illness as any other. Anyway, that is my disease now ; and here they are determining that nothing but Italy can cure me. I am so annoyed at losing the little bit of intelligence I thought I had, as well as the legs I really did have, that I cannot decide

on the spot to go off to Pisa in pursuit of them. I leave on the 30th ; I shall spend a few days in Paris and Geneva, cross by the Simplon ; and there I am. My little boy is going with me, and my grown-up son is coming from Paris to meet me.

Shall I see you in Italy ? I leave affairs here in much the same state as they have been in for some time. There is no agreement among the Ministers and, indeed, very little contact. Canning treats them all as fools, and only sends them from time to time a few crumbs from his table. He laughs at them openly—all except Liverpool, at whom he laughs secretly. All the Ministers hate him like poison and long to throw him out ; but there is not a man among them with the courage to do it. Huskisson is going to enter the Cabinet ; he is a clever man and devoted to Canning.

The King makes love, goes out, and every day loses a little of the lively interest he took in affairs ; he does not want to be bothered. He still thinks on the right side ; but, by preference, he does not think at all. The Duke of York is the more active. The other day, I tried to rouse his pride a little by pointing out that he had a will. Why did he not use it ? He knew very well that he would be acting in accordance with his brother's views. He would have all the Ministers on his side except one, and would exercise an immense influence over public opinion. He reflected for a moment, and then said : "But the King is such a dangerous man. Might he not become jealous of me ?" The Duke of York is afraid of no-one in the world, except his brother.

PART IV

Canning Triumphant

Canning Triumphant

WORN out by the excitement of the struggle against Canning, Madame de Lieven fell ill and was obliged to pass the winter of 1823-4 in a warm southern climate. Italian scenery, she records, gave her a great deal of pleasure ; but she was horrified at being thus stranded in a political backwater, far from newspapers and communicative English statesmen. She returned home only to find that, during her absence, the incorrigible Mr. Canning had gone from bad to worse and now proposed to give official recognition to Spain's revolted South American colonies. Once more, the "Cottage Clique" attempted his overthrow ; once more, Canning weathered the storm. Not only did he overcome, he positively intimidated, opposition ; and "the King (according to Professor Temperley) at last realised that the game was up. His demagogic and Jacobin Foreign Minister carried thunders in his hand and must be appeased. At the end of April he sent . . . Sir William Knighton with an overture to Canning . . . Canning received this overture with surprise and delight, and welcomed the prodigal King to his bosom."

"It can hardly be an accident (adds Professor Temperley) that, early in May 1825, Madame de Lieven publicly announced that she was leaving on an extended visit to St. Petersburg." But, whatever her motives for leaving England, her visit to Russia was extremely successful, and she was able to gain the confidence of the Czar Alexander, who, from being a Liberal (as Madame de Lieven regretfully admits), had now thrown in his lot with the

forces of reaction. Unfortunately, at the end of 1825, Alexander died; and Madame de Lieven, whose hopes had been raised sky-high by the flattering reception she had met with in St. Petersburg, was obliged to fall back on English politics. Here, like the King, she realised that, since Canning could not be outmatched, he had best be conciliated; and the gradual, but unmistakable, change in her attitude (which she was too crafty altogether to suppress) is curiously reflected in these letters. The fascination of Metternich was beginning to wane; for the question of Greece now divided Russia and Austria, and Canning's intellect was definitely in the ascendant; but Madame de Lieven still seems to have regretted the past—to have looked back longingly to the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. "We should be hard put to it, you and I, to find in the whole world people of our own calibre (she writes, in the last letter of this collection). Our hearts are well matched, our minds too . . . I repeat: you will find no one better than me. If you meet your like, show him to me. Good-bye."

Paris, October 2.

I have this minute arrived. I am tired to death; but I must write you a line. Between the moment I decided to set out and the moment I got into my carriage, I had no time to breathe in London. My husband did not leave me for a second. He is very much distressed by my departure. I went to spend two days at Windsor. What with the King's anger at my going, his entreaties that I should stay, his plans for settling me comfortably in his house for the whole winter, his little secret intrigues to this end, and our final talks together, I had, in all those two days, only the time strictly necessary for sleeping; all the rest of the time I spent with the King. When I got back to London, there were farewell calls. The Duke of Wellington deserted the Scottish marches, Mrs.

Arbuthnot and the partridges, to spend the last days with me. The Duke of York, too, left his hunting for the same purpose. Anyone would have thought I was going for good, and that they were coming to receive my last dying words. Eventually, I left on September 28. My husband came with me as far as Dover ; I left him on shore looking very sad. I had a good crossing. Next day, there was a frightful storm and many ships were lost on the French coast. No sooner had I arrived in Paris than Pozzo arrived, to pounce on me, all wit and news. He stayed three hours ; I feel over-fed with genius. I am dying for a mutton chop, and am half-asleep ; but I felt I must tell you the whole story.

The 4th.

If you could look into the Hôtel Dorvilliers, where I am staying, you would see me, from nine o'clock in the morning, in conference now with Pozzo ; now with Prince Wolkonsky ; now with my son's tutor ; now giving moral advice to my son ; now receiving news from Rothschild, and itineraries and advice on every side. One says a certain road is the best ; another says it is the worst. I must go this way ; I must go the other. To hear them talking, you would think one spoke of China, another of Canada. Travelers are really unblushing liars. All this confuses me so much, that I cannot think clearly.

Pozzo treats me as you used to treat me, when we first knew one another. He finds me a good listener. That is a trick worth learning. A man who feels that he is understood immediately becomes well disposed towards the person who understands him ; and I think I have won Pozzo's heart. In any case, it has all been to my advantage ; for I have listened to a great deal of witty conversation.

I am talking of Paris when I ought to be talking of London.

Wellington is more exasperated than ever with Canning. When he was talking about him, he clutched his head in his hands and said : "How foolish, how stupid, how blind I was to put that man into the Cabinet !" With regard to the present situation, he maintains the view that England should not meddle. As for Canning, I fancy that the question of the colonies is going to keep him occupied and that he is likely to get very enthusiastic about it.

Paris, the 4th.

I have had a very sad letter from my husband ; I wrote him a sad one too. My journey is beset by a thousand troubles and difficulties. I am worried about my health. I have distress on every side ; and this distress has transferred itself to my legs. Indeed, all worries, excitements and annoyances go to my knees ; which induced Lady Granville to remark the other day : "*I never heard of sentimental knees before.*"

The 5th.

Pozzo was with me this morning. Suddenly, in comes Prince Castelvicala crying : "The King of Spain is free." Pozzo flung his arms round my neck and kissed me and hugged me as if he were mad. Castelvicala, seeing how easy it was, kissed me too ; so there I was offering my cheeks for the love of Ferdinand. Meanwhile, the news is good ; it is excellent ; and I am really delighted. After enjoying Pozzo's raptures, I should have liked to enjoy Mr. Canning's disgust ; but one cannot have everything at once. I can't tell you how exultant Pozzo is. He regards himself, with some reason, as the prime mover in the affair. He is witty, even when he is boasting. "Well," I said, "what will Europe do for you ?"—"You are right," he said. "What *will* she do ? She ought to do something, for the sake of her own

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IN GENEVA

reputation ; it would make me too famous if I were left unrewarded. Indeed, your idea is an excellent one ; but it must be admitted that our master has never exhausted himself distributing rewards." Pozzo leaves for Madrid in a few days. He has scarcely moved from my rooms ; but I assure you that he is not in love with me.

Geneva, October 13.

Here I am in the gloomiest place on earth, and certainly in the gloomiest weather I have ever seen. It has never stopped pouring with rain during the whole forty-eight hours I have been at Sucheron's ; and there is such a fog that I have no idea whether there are a lake and mountains or not ; although I am told that I am staying on the shore of the lake. I like to believe what I am told ; but my imagination has been so chilled by the bad weather that I can picture nothing beyond a white room, very simple but clean, and a bright fire burning on my hearth.

I was nearly poisoned on the way ; I thought I was going to die. I am still not at all well ; I am afraid of the snow on the Simplon ; I am afraid of all kinds of things ; and I am rather gloomy. Did I do right or wrong in undertaking this journey ? Was it wise or foolish ? Success is the only thing really worth having. All the wisdom in the world cannot control destiny. It does with us as it pleases ; I wish it would be pleased to bring you to Italy while I am there.

Geneva, October 14.

When I opened my eyes this morning, I saw the lake, the smiling countryside on its shores, the mountains beyond and the summit of Mont Blanc towering over the whole landscape. Above, a canopy of snow covering the mountains ; below, the trees in their fine autumnal colouring. It was a

lovely prospect ; and for half-an-hour it held me quite entranced. I am staying here all today. I need some rest, and I want the sun to make the roads a little easier. In the middle of these picturesque contemplations, I am thinking of the King of Spain and the effect his liberation will have in London. Will there be a congress ? Is that probable or only possible ? When and where would it be ? I implore you, from time to time, to keep me informed how the world goes. My mind is accustomed to it and I should be sorry to get out of the habit. My husband is the soul of prudence ; besides, we can correspond only through the post. It is the same with the letters the Duke of Wellington will write me. So, without you, I run the risk of relapsing into the conventional feminine rôle ; and it seems to me that would be a pity. I need not remind you that discretion is one of my most conspicuous qualities. Treat me as I deserve ; and, in a few months, I shall take up my diplomatic post again without having deteriorated.

Milan, October 20.

I was nearly swallowed up in the snow, crossing the Simplon. It would not be possible to come nearer death than I was ; and I cannot understand why I am not at the foot of a precipice. You won't catch me on the Simplon in October again ; I'm not sure about the dog days either. How right you were, that time I thought you were exaggerating, when you spoke of the descent to Domodossola ! What a marvellous view !

Well, so I find you are not coming to Italy after all. Then why did you ask me to come ? Your letter was definite. The Emperor had to make the trip ; it only remained to decide between the beginning and the end of the winter. Now it is neither the beginning nor the end. And I have

left all my comforts, all the interests of my life, all my intellectual habits, for the sake of an alien sky which warms my body but leaves my mind utterly vacant. Heavens, what a country ! Even the harmless *Moniteur* does not penetrate here. My mind will turn to marble, like all those statues in the cathedral. What an idea to put up so many !—more than the entire population of a German Duchy. Lake Maggiore threw me into ecstasies of admiration. Heavens, how beautiful it is, and how beautifully Isola Bella adorns it ! I walked nearly all the way from Bavena to Arona. The weather was superb, and the lovely road, and the lovely lake, and the blue mountains with their rich vineyards, and the waterfalls—how beautiful, how beautiful ! . . . But if only there were some newspapers !

I must go back to Geneva. Capo d'Istria arrived a few hours before I left. He spent them with me. I should go on writing for a week if I were to tell you all he said. There was no conversation between us. He talked without stopping. He did not wear me out with questions ; he never asked me a single one ; either he thinks I know nothing, or he fancies he is in full possession of the facts and can foretell the future ; so that I had the easiest part in the world to play. I notice, in general, that clever people like to have me as a listener ; yet not one of them tries to find out if I can speak in my turn. I think Capo d'Istria is lucky ; he is the king of make-believe. He believes firmly in what he wants. He is convinced that everything is moving towards the victory of his ultra-liberal party. "Spain is a happy chance ; but nobody will have the sense to take advantage of it. No doubt, they were a miserable lot ; but what is one to think of the governments who allow themselves to be disturbed and alarmed by such wretched creatures ? They are more despicable themselves ; and, being so, how can they hope to guide nations ? Liberalism is in men's hearts ; you cannot

fight against it. You must accept it, or risk defeat. The Emperor Alexander is going through a period of giddy aberration. Forty years of right feeling must prevail against two years of self-important delusion. He will feel, as his people wish him to feel, the ignominy of being ruled by an Austrian Minister. But the awakening must not come too late—he might pay too dearly for it.” Here, if you will forgive my saying so, I secretly applauded Capo d’Istria.

They are frightening me about Pisa. I am assured that I shall die of boredom there, if I don’t die of sickness. I am advised to try Rome. I think I shall go there, instead of Pisa. I shall stop a few days in Florence. The Duke of Devonshire lords it in Milan ; but that would be a dismal last resort. I never meet a man or a woman I can talk to. Heavens, I ought to have stayed in London ! From this distance, the excitements of London seem endless.

So the first decree of the King of Spain repeals all the measures of the Constitutional Government. Consequently, the English Government will be in a great upset about the Loan. That will put us in a difficulty with them ; plenty of paper will be wasted and very little good sense talked. Politics interest me far more than my legs. I believe that, after all, the desire to live is simply the result of wanting to know what is going to happen. I should hate to die without knowing what will be the outcome of the Congress of Verona. Will vanity make France do something imprudent, or will she listen to you ? Will she not prefer her independence ? Living, as I do, in a hole, I implore you to give me the news. There’s not a ray of light here ; a brilliant sky and complete moral darkness. Indeed, I appreciate politics far more than the sun. Its vainglory annoys me ; it seems to be putting me to shame.

I went to La Scala. It is a magnificent theatre ; but the opera was bad. The ballet was bad ; there was not a single

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TRAVELLING

good dancer ; but the music was charming, and the grouping delightful. I do not know what effect the other places I am going to visit will have on me ; but I do know that I shall have the most unpleasant memories of Milan. I am sick of the silence and the ignorance that surround me.

Florence, October 31.

I left Milan on the 27th. I spent a night at Parma, another at Bologna, and on the 29th at Florence. I arrived quite exhausted, and two days' rest have not restored me yet. I shall not do myself any good the way I am setting about it. A sick woman ought to have someone travelling with her to look after her. Twenty times a day, I am annoyed by having to arrange everything and think for myself. I should like someone else to take all the responsibility, and I should like that someone to be my husband. I always prefer what is natural ; and I find my position here unnatural. I am wandering about Italy alone, with no plan except that of spending the winter. I am caught between two great barriers, the Alps and the Apennines ; all I care for is beyond them ; it is a sad thought.

The first person to take any notice of me at Florence was Bombelles. I find it admirable that he should have couriers to send you every day ; but I won't bother you as often as his couriers. I shall go back to our habits of five years past—weekly letters. Will that suit you ?

November 4.

Each of my husband's letters is more pathetic than the last ; I can see that it would not take much to make him implore me to come back, just as, at the slightest encouragement, I should take the road for England. Indeed, I am only staying as a matter of form.

I went to pay my respects at Court. The Grand Duke gave me a cordial reception. You know that I like him very much. He remembered that it was exactly a year to the day since he saw me for the first time in your apartment at Verona. You have to be a sovereign to possess a memory like that. How ridiculous that he should have nothing better to do ! For the rest, your Grand Duke of Tuscany is an excellent Prince.

I am taking a course of Florence. . . . I am rather like Madame de Sévigné, who said that what she saw tired her and what she did not see worried her. I shall stay here probably till the 15th—above all, if the sun keeps me company. After that, it will be Rome or Pisa. I have no society here except the tiny, the infinitesimal diplomatic corps. If you only knew how microscopic it seems to me ! I wish you could see the importance that these little Ministers attach to some minute bit of news that their Cabinet vouchsafes them—how mysteriously the despatch is opened : how it is read in a low and emotional voice, then respectfully folded up again. It is as good as a play to see them taking it out of their pockets and putting it back. Unfortunately, I have nobody to laugh with, the same thing would happen, next day, with the person whom, the day before, I had made my accomplice.

Florence, November 9.

I am awaiting news from you, for I hear that you were to be back in Vienna on the first of this month. I am anxious to know that you are settled again. As for myself, I am better. I am exactly like the English climate : the change from one extreme to the other takes place with astonishing speed. I have been having some good days ; and the change is so startling that I have actually grown fatter. Don't ask me

where I am going ; for I don't know. Rome is a long way off ; Pisa is depressing ; and Florence will be getting cold. Of the three, I don't know which I shall choose ; but I can assure you that it won't be a place I shall freeze in.

What can I tell you about Florence ? You will know, without my telling you, that I do not like it. What little society exists is negligible. Lady Burghersh is my first resort ; for, at least, she has sense. Have you ever met a more ill-bred woman than Madame Bombelles ? As for the men, you know the diplomats of Florence ; and you can imagine that they do not suit me. I met M. de Luchessi and singled him out for his reputation and his good manners.

Isn't it strange that, the moment I was writing this, his name should have been sent in. I received him, and he stayed a long time. I got him to talk about Frederick the Great, and listened to him with singular interest. He has wit, shrewdness and an Italian accent, which adds charm to everything. I shall make use of him. I fancy I found that past history was a better subject than present. His extreme discretion is not so much in evidence as when he talks of more recent events. I shall not mention the year '94 ; and I am sure I shall enjoy making him talk. People talk to me a great deal, as soon as I begin to listen.

I have had a long letter from the Duke of Wellington, and one from Lord Grey. The latter seems to me to be in a very bad temper. As for the Duke, he is delighted at events in Cadiz ; it does him credit, for it is at the expense of his pride. Of course, it is quite likely that he has forgotten that "The Duke of Angoulême will never have done with Cadiz" ; and probably, when he heard the news, he exclaimed : "Devil take me, it is just what I always said would happen."

The 14th.

The sun is very hot and the wind very cold. That does not make a good climate ; but I am well placed to enjoy the first and avoid the second. I have the sun in my room, as long as it pleases the sun to shine on Florence. I am in excellent health ; I can hardly believe that my legs ever hurt me. I walk a great deal ; I feel well ; and I look well ; so much so that people laugh when I inform them that I came to Italy for my health. I am growing fat in the very teeth of Providence. I cannot understand what has accomplished this miracle. However, as it happened in Florence, I do not see why I should leave such a miraculous spot. So here I am, till the miracle comes to an end.

I think I have found two sources of entertainment in Florence, Luchessi and the Duchess of Albany¹ ; that will help me to pass the time. Yesterday, I was at a great ball which Prince Camille Borghese gave for me. His house is beautiful and decorated with taste. Himself, he can scarcely breathe for fat, diamonds and stupidity. Prince Neri Corsini is being polite and pleasant to me, as if I had not been rude to him at Verona. He has asked me to dine tonight and I am rather nervous. Which reminds me that Mansi talks of nothing else but that charming Madame de Lieven, the kindest, the pleasantest person in the world. I am not joking, that is what he says. I can see after all that there is nothing like being rude ; that is the way to make a great reputation. Lord Dudley, "your friend," is here. He is clever but he hates Austria in the same way that one feels a horror of spiders, mice, and other creatures of the kind.

November 21.

I have received your No. 147 ; thank you for reassuring me about your health. Together with your health, resume

¹ Wife, first of Charles Edward Stuart ; secondly of the poet Alfieri.

Nov. 1823]

THESE LETTERS

your old habits. Write every day, and send me a letter every week. I beg you, moreover, to set me an example ; for I should feel some diffidence about letting the whole of your diplomatic service into the secret that I show more eagerness than you do.

Florence, the 28th.

I assure you that, when I examine my conscience, I find a feeling of modesty. I have nothing to tell you except about myself ; for several years, our correspondence has covered so many interesting subjects outside my province, that I feel impoverished when it comes to writing from my own head. You are hurting me ; while I am only sparing you boredom. Encourage me ; it is the only way to set me writing.

My health is still good ; but I am leaving for Rome. It gives me no pleasure to be going there ; it is the same with everything in Italy. My mind is asleep, and it makes me sad. I am not an intriguer—you know that ; but my brain needs some occupation. How am I to use the poor thing here ? Inwardly, I speculate and draw conclusions ; but I have nobody to whom to communicate them, and it annoys me. I should like to question you and hear you talk. I should like to have a look at London ; but that is not all. I should like to say some silly things to the fools there, and give a little courage to the cowards. In short, I should like to do precisely what I can't do ; and my imagination, after all the way it has come and all the things it has done, finds me planted in the midst of a little country inhabited by little people, among whom there is not one who looks farther than the end of his own nose ; and even for that they put on spectacles . . .

I have Madame Hortense¹ as a neighbour in the hotel where

¹ Wife of the former King of Holland : mother of the future Napoleon III.

I am staying. They are always mixing us up—letters, calls, everything goes wrong. And yet I cannot see any similarity between us except that Lieven and St. Luc both begin with an L. Madame Récamier is here too ; she has taken a false name to avoid publicity.

Rome, December 8.

Ah, how beautiful Rome is ! You would be pleased with me ; for I am nearly off my head. I arrived the day before yesterday in brilliant sunshine. As soon as I caught sight of the dome of St. Peter's, I began to cry ; would you believe it ? I am sure it is impossible to approach Rome without feeling some nervous thrill. Yesterday I rushed off to St. Peter's ; thence to the Pantheon, the Capitol, the Forum, the Colosseum—I wanted to see everything at once. I should like to live in the Forum and pay a visit every day to St. Peter's—that expresses the shade of difference in my feelings for them. What marvels there are at Rome ! But then, I have an immense supply of admiration ; for, up to now, I have never in my life admired anything. I can see that at Rome I shall use up my entire stock.

There are Englishmen here of every complexion, Lord Dudley and Lord Kinnaird¹ being the only intelligent persons among them. It is a pity that one of them hates you and that I hate the other. The latter (Kinnaird) appeared in my drawing-room without warning ; in London, I do not receive him. I was rather cold, but it was no use ; he stayed an hour and a half. M. de Laval came too. He stutters ; he is deaf and blind ; but he is intelligent, I like him. They say that Madame d'Apponyi is sentimental ; you realise that will not suit me. The Duchess of Devonshire² is still sighing

¹ Nephew of Byron's friend and boon-companion, Douglas Kinnaird.

² The second Duchess who, as Lady Elizabeth Foster, had been the Duke's mistress, and Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire's greatest friend.

for her Cardinal. The Barannofskys are here. The people I have mentioned do not amount to a great deal ; but they constitute the sole society that Heaven has bestowed on me for the next three months.

My little boy amuses me very much. He is convinced that the evangelists who support the Chair of St. Peter are Cossacks ; and, today, he was clamouring to go up the Scala Santa on his knees—he thought it was a game. I dislike all the antics they perform in Rome ; I should prefer to feel nothing but respect and piety ; and only too often I am obliged to laugh. A few of my compatriots here have turned Catholic. One is a woman with a great deal of intelligence, Madame Svetchine. I have a little too ; but I shall remain Lutheran.

The 12th.

Prince Philippe of Homburg and Count Walmoden came to see me this morning. They arrived straight from Vienna. What they tell me about you distresses me. You have put yourself in the hands of a hateful doctor. He forbids you to take the air. But where is your strength to come from ? You need air, exercise, peace of mind, distraction, nothing that worries you or tires you. Think about it seriously ; come to Italy. First consider getting well ; there will be plenty of time later to think of other things. Leave Mr. Canning to take care of himself. In any case, you will never turn him into a Minister according to your taste.

December 19.

M. de Laval is assiduous in his attentions. As a personage, he is somewhat ridiculous ; but he is a good sort ; and, for a few minutes of the day, he shows that he has a certain wit,

originality, even judgement ; but it serves only to throw into relief the dark spots, "*make darkness visible.*" Madame Apponyi is full of politeness towards me ; the Duchess of Devonshire is full of attentions and caresses. Lord Kinnaird diverts me sometimes. He really is extremely witty ; and his wit has become so rounded and gentle that his company really delights me. He spares me all embarrassment for the future. Kinnaird, as he is in Rome, is welcome in my house ; but, as he has to be quite different in London in order to keep up his reputation, it follows naturally that I shall not receive him there. It will be he who has changed, and not I.

The 27th.

I am sending back your Benvenuto Cellini. I read it religiously. I am even more astonished by his vanity than by his talent ; and I am thankful to be living in another century, for his dagger and his sword would have made me nervous at the other end of Europe.

I am better. I dined yesterday with Lord Kinnaird ; that would make them laugh in England, and it would make my husband rather apprehensive, but political prudery in Rome would be simply absurd. I made M. de Laval dine there with me ; and he is not a Jacobin. The dinner was very pleasant. Your "friend," Lord Dudley, and Lord Kinnaird vied with one another in wit and jocularity. Really, I like witty people ; it may be a fault, but I can't help it.

I intend to avoid going out this evening, and above all I intend to avoid those beautiful floors of antique mosaic. In fact, as soon as I am invited to a reception, I ask if the house contains any mosaics ; they hasten to say : "Yes, and very fine ones," fancying that it will make me all the more certain to go. Then I stay at home. Winter is winter in Rome

Jan. 1824]

PEOPLE

just as it is anywhere else—more than anywhere else ; for these great palaces are ice-houses.

January 8, 1824.

Your No. 150 has just come ; I am delighted to hear of your triumphant good health. Mine is still excellent ; I walk ; I go to the Pincio and meet all the ci-devant society, Jérôme¹ and his wife, driving in full livery, with the cockade of the Kingdom of Westphalia, Madame Hortense and her Court, Pauline Borghese, Madame Récamier. I see all England there too. Afterwards, England comes and talks in my house until dinner, which takes place at the English hour of half-past six. Among my guests, I usually have Lord Kinnaird, who talks, and seems to think, like a perfectly sensible and reasonable man. This astonishes me more every day ; but I fancy that it is only his Roman suit of clothes, and that he is anxious to sport it in my presence. Apart from him—and he is very intelligent—the rest seem to me a little more second-rate every day. Are you like me in this : I have quite an indulgent and kindly opinion of people, until I allow myself to laugh at them. Once I have begun, I can't stop ; and they never say another word which does not strike me as ridiculous. Poor M. de Laval with his "Well, that's it, that's it," and "Perhaps that is not what you think," etc.—explanations which I do not advise you to listen to right to the end—I can't look at him any more without laughing.

Madame Esterhazy has done well to change the decoration of her mouth ; but what will one of her London lovers think—he who maintained that he found nothing more attractive than bad teeth : Everybody laughed at him, except me. The poor man was evidently in love ; and, that being so, his remark was quite natural. The King of England,

¹ Former King of Westphalia : father of the famous Princess Mathilde.

when he was still in love with Lady Hertford, could not bear women without eyebrows. Since he has been in love with Lady Conyngham, he thinks that no feature is more unbecoming.

Rome, January 21.

I entered the Pantheon yesterday. How beautiful it is ! —the light falling straight from the sky without any artificial interposition—the idea and the effect enrapture me. Do you know me in my new guise of enthusiast ? You must be very much surprised. To turn from the sublime to the ridiculous, I attended that same evening a performance in French at the house of M. Demidoff. He has a hired troop who act burlesque quite well. He is half dead himself. In between the temple of Agrippa and society burlesques, I went back to my favourite walk along the Tiber. Usually, it is deserted ; but, this morning, I saw M. de Laval appear on horseback. At once, he was thrown, and flung a long distance. I thought for a moment that he was going to roll into the Tiber. The poor man is a bad rider, besides being blind. I ran towards him in real alarm. He had not hurt himself ; but never in my life have I seen him in such a bad temper. His first words were : “But . . . but . . . but what are you here for ? Well, yes, I did fall off ; but what has that got to do with you ?” I did not know that he took so much pride in sticking on his horse. I had some difficulty in not laughing ; but, after all, that is a point of honour like anything else.

January 25.

I do not laugh at the poor Duchess of Devonshire any more, because she must be really unhappy ; and true sorrow always touches me. But what I still do not like is the ostentation



Princess Lieven, from a bust by Thomas Campbell (Rome, 1824)

Jan. 1824]

LORD HASTINGS

with which she professes her attachment. At no age should a woman dispense with reserve about her relations with a man.

January 26.

We have India personified here—Lord and Lady Hastings ; I took M. de Laval to see them the other day. They showed us some very interesting drawings, done in India, representing the curious monuments of that country. You ought to have seen M. de Laval's astonishment and heard the naïve questions he asked Lord Hastings. I saw that the moment was coming when he would enquire in what part of the globe India was. There were a few English people there who were looking at him with incredulous surprise. Finally, when we came to Brahma, who was quite a new character to him, and whom he supposed a Prince subject to the East India Company, it was too much for their gravity and mine ; there was a general and spontaneous burst of laughter ; and once I begin I never stop.

The 30th.

I can see how delighted Capo d'Istria will be at the news of the death of Sir Thomas Maitland. His post might well be given to Lord Hastings—if he will accept it, for he is the proudest and haughtiest man in the world. When there was talk of creating for him the post of Ambassador at Naples, he would only take it on condition that it comprised also the control of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. For the rest, he is a man of singular integrity, and, on a point of honour, the most chivalrous in the world. As Governor in India, he displayed military and administrative talents ; but he is not a man of lively social intelligence.

My friend in London is quite distracted at the thought of spending her days amongst the Dutch ladies. She will make

an extremely odd Ambadress. She cannot bear any kind of constraint ; and her sole pleasure in society is to get into the most obscure corner of a drawing-room, equipped with her lorgnettes, so that she can see how ridiculous all the surrounding faces are, and accompanied by someone she can laugh with. She has never learned to be polite. I have often seen the King of England call her to sit by him—and two minutes later she would leave him because she did not find him amusing.

The 12th.

I have just come back from the tomb of Cecilia Metella. For a moment, I saw you. I could picture you admiring the aqueducts, as they stride away out of sight, nobly intersecting the Campagna. We two should live happily in Rome. You are mad about it ; I am quite ready to go mad ; together, we should make a happy and harmonious household.

The 12th, evening.

Where is your letter, what has become of it ? Haven't you written to me ? The courier has come and I get—Bathiany. Ah, how wicked you are, how hateful ! I wish I could send my abuse as quickly as I can say it. I am furious. To get no letters would be a calamity anywhere ; but how much more of a calamity in Rome ! To punish you, I am going to dine with your friend Lord Dudley. If he abuses you, I shall tell him he is right. I shall be very hostile to Austria today. I shall applaud Lord Kinnaird when he declares that the Proclamation of Milan is a pack of lies. In short, I am going to change from an extremely good ally to the worst possible. It is very bad policy not to write to me.

Feb. 1824]

CARNIVAL AND TABLEAUX

The 14th.

Carnival is in full swing here. I don't miss any of the fun ; but I have my own especial way of enjoying it. No attraction is strong enough to keep me up after half-past ten. If I did not keep pedantically to this rule, I should not be able to escape without being impolite. But, in this respect, I am so impartially rude that my bad manners have become privileged. Recently, M. d'Apponyi gave a little party for his wife. They acted a French play and presented *tableaux vivants*. Right in the middle of the *tableau*, it was time for me to go, and I went. They said nothing, nobody was hurt. Talking of *tableaux*, it is the first time I have seen them. They are very pleasing ; but, as with fireworks, an eternity is spent in preparing for a single moment. What trouble, what care, what vexation probably, all for the amusement of a few seconds ! And to make oneself look as much as possible like a piece of canvas ! Nature trying to imitate art—what nonsense !

I spend my days in the Forum. I go there alone, so that I can admire at will. I come and go, to right, to left. I have a highly developed taste for fine architecture ; it is nearer to my heart than anything else. Those beautiful columns, those arches, and the ruins, and the whole history of Rome they bring to mind ! I enjoy it all—more than you would believe. In short, I see what is going to happen to me : the Forum Romanum and the Roman sun are going to spoil me for the rest of my life.

Rome, March 8.

There has been a gap in my letters, and this is why. Paul¹ has fought a duel. I knew nothing about it until he came

¹ Paul Lieven : not, of course, to be confused with the other Paul—Prince Esterhazy.

to tell me himself that it was all over, and successfully concluded. But the mere fact of a duel upset me so much that, for several days, I was incapable of thinking about it clearly—far less, thinking about anything else.

The affair started with a piece of folly on Paul's part ; the sequel was the result of a piece of well-meaning clumsiness on the part of the Duc de Laval. Paul thought he had been insulted by a mask at a ball in Demidoff's house ; he grew heated ; and, when he was told that the masker was a French painter, being vexed at having to deal with anyone of so little account, he exclaimed that he would not demand satisfaction for the impertinences of a mere artist. It was a bit of pure aristocratic nonsense, and very ill-advised. The Ambassador took it upon himself to offer his services and, what was worse, to use his authority to persuade the artist to apologise to my son for provoking him, if in return the latter would declare that he had no intention of doing him bodily injury. That would have been the end of it ; but people began to talk. They said that, in order to get out of a duel, Paul had had recourse to the protection of the authorities. These rumours reached his ears ; and he at once made up his mind to fight the first man who should speak to him on the subject. The lot fell on a Frenchman, the Marquis de Bonneval. He asked the advice of several of my acquaintances. They all approved his resolution. He handed over to them the management of the affair, and fought with pistols. After the first shot had missed, the Frenchman wanted to stop the duel ; Paul insisted that it should go on. Then the Frenchman made suitable apologies ; and my son's seconds decided that he could regard himself as having been given complete satisfaction. In the second half of the affair, he bore himself with a courage and a modesty that won him general approbation. He acted without boastfulness, without precipitation, and with a coolness and

a resolution both honourable and uncommon at his age. The whole of English society in Rome has taken up the cudgels on his behalf with a warmth that has really touched me. The old Marquess of Hastings came to see me half-an-hour afterwards, with tears of joy in his eyes, and congratulated me on having a *true gentleman* for son. My drawing-room was as crowded as a fair. When the details of the business had sunk into my mind, I began to see that I had much more cause for rejoicing than for regret. I feel grateful to him for the skill and the solicitude he showed, in trying to keep all this from me till the last moment. I thank God for it; my anxiety would have been for my son the worst thing possible.

The 14th.

After the most persistent importunities and advances, full of affection and reminders of old times, I went to call on Madame de Montfort. Gérome had the good taste not to be at home. I sent in my name. She talked for a good hour about her political misfortunes, her married happiness (my goodness, she need not have bothered !) and the persecutions inflicted on her by Prince Metternich. You are not beloved in that family. The poor woman moved me. There is a noble side to her behaviour; and good intentions always attract me. She showed me her little Gérome and her little Napoleon, who are charming children. She wept with gratitude, when she spoke of the Emperor Alexander. She begged me to come to her receptions, which I shan't do. Such were the details of our conversation.

I hear from London that the King is perfectly delighted that his Parliament has allowed him £300,000 for the restoration of Windsor Castle. It has put him in a good temper with his Ministers. English finances are magnificent. There

has not been such internal prosperity for thirty years. You can see that you will not be able to overthrow Mr. Canning.

Good-bye, I am spending my last days in Rome in going about, in being well and in making fun of M de Laval. He is made to be laughed at; I have started everybody doing it. I went to see the studios of Canova and Thorwaldsen. Is it heresy to prefer Thorwaldsen?

Rome, March 20.

This letter is destined to stay behind me in Rome. I shall hand over my posthumous works to Appony on the 28th; on which day I shall leave the city. I am hoping that I shall get your letter the day before. I see little likelihood of its making me prolong my stay in Italy. I am waiting for it more for conscience' sake than from the least feeling of necessity. I have not even a presentiment this time.

During these last days, we have had a frightful tragedy. The unfortunate French Ambassador was out riding with an English family. He was leading, and took them to the banks of the Tiber, to the right of the Ponte Molo, and along a path which few people would think of taking, even on foot. He got through, with the good luck which, it is said, Providence grants to children and madmen. Lord Aylmer followed him, and next a young Miss Bathurst, the most lovely creature I think I ever saw in my life. She and her horse rolled down the bank and were swallowed up in the waters of the Tiber, which was considerably swollen by the rains and, that day, resembled a boiling torrent rather than an ordinary river. They all lost their heads, Laval worst of all. He bolted across country till one in the morning. They thought he was lost, searched for him by torch-light all round Rome, and finally found him stretched on a bed in a tavern, half out of his mind. The poor girl's body

March 1824]

ACCIDENTS

has not yet been recovered. You cannot imagine what consternation this tragedy has caused in society. Indeed, I cannot sleep at night ; I cannot get out of my head the picture of that lovely creature at the bottom of the Tiber, and it makes me too sad for words.

The 21st.

Another accident. Paul has hurt his leg terribly. The whole of the flesh has been torn away above the ankle. The surgeon takes a serious view. Until he has examined the wound he cannot say how long it will take to heal ; and that will not be for two days. Meanwhile, the chances are a delay of at least a fortnight. You can imagine how that vexes and worries me. In the midst of my worry, I received your No. 154. It calls for gratitude, though it contains nothing but bad news. You have taken pains to send me the information I wanted as soon as possible—so that, if it were not for my son's wretched leg, your attention would have made me leave even earlier than I had intended. That is to say, I should have gained time for my future movements. I can see now how they will be affected ; a delay of a fortnight makes an enormous difference in my reckoning. Thank you for all the kind and polite things you say, for the funny ones and the sad ones too. But you have forgotten it all. That is one of the bad sides of letter-writing : you don't know what makes your correspondent laugh or cry when your letter arrives. I should like to have mine copied. I should re-read them on the day I reckoned that they would reach you. Once my packet is sealed, I have not the slightest recollection of what it contains.

Turin, April 20.

It is a long time since I wrote to you. I spared you my *alas's*; for that was the only word I uttered during my last fortnight in Rome. I divided my time between seeing the surgeon and looking out of the window. The wound did not clear up, any more than the clouds. My impatience made me very bad company. Everyone suffered for it. I did not want to make another victim by writing to you. At last, one fine day, I had a good idea: I would take the surgeon with me; and I started on the 13th. I have had a good journey so far, with the most beautiful weather. I took the Furlo road. I wanted to see the Adriatic. There is nothing more enchanting than that coast, from Fano to Rimini. The whole country from Rome to Turin had a festive air—the green in all its first freshness; the air soft without being, as yet, too warm; superb sky and sun; magnificent roads; the people in their holiday clothes. There was not a single traveller to deprive me of the post-horses, because only a heretic like myself would leave Rome and all its religious ceremonies in the middle of Holy Week. I don't mind in the least; I prefer to push on. In any case, my impatience, the last three weeks, was pointless. The Mont Cenis was impassable. If I had left Rome on the 28th, as I intended to do, I should have been stuck in Turin all this time. Even now, there is some risk; but one can get across. Before I leave Italy, I must discharge a duty—that is to beg you to express to the Apponyis your appreciation of all their kindness and attentiveness towards me. It would give them great pleasure; and it is probably what their politeness aimed at. To them and their kind, you are what God the Father is to the world at large. Their respect, their fear and their love for you make me nearly die with laughing. Your man here, Lutzen, is bursting with it too.

You would not believe how beautiful Italy has made me.

May 1824]

RETURN TO LONDON

You are missing a great deal by not seeing me, and no doubt this is the Indian summer of my charm. Fogs and journeys will make me lose it all; and age will prevent a second miracle—what a pity!

London, May 9.

What a long gap in our correspondence! I did not think Paris was safe, nor Caraman either. I simply gave him a cold, polite little note. I reserved all my intimacies for London. I never write while I am travelling. I get out of my carriage only to go to my bed. Up to now, I have found no rival to the latter, except in Verona, where I was exceedingly unfaithful. I had a good journey, except for the Mont Cenis, which was disgusting. The sea treats me better than do the mountains. I crossed in two hours and a half. My husband was waiting for me at Dover. We took two days going from there to London, on purpose to put off the moment of meeting bores. For the last two days I have been a prey to everyone—people from every stratum of society, with an occasional pleasant encounter. I found Wellington aged, downcast and dissatisfied; Canning on the pinnacle of success; the Opposition in high hopes. I am getting my bearings a little. I listen to everyone. In a few days, all the talk I have heard will fall into some sort of order in my mind; I will extract the essence and give it you.

Now I am thinking of my journey to Russia. The English Government is offering me the King's yacht to take me to St. Petersburg.

The 11th.

I have not seen the King yet. He dare not ask me to Windsor. The newspapers hardly let him go out for a walk

—so furious are the public that he keeps putting off that eternal Drawing-Room. They want him to hold it, or else to die.

I do nothing ; I am still listening. I think about my journey. I am afraid of being separated from my darling little boy ; I am afraid of being seasick, of the fatigue of a land journey ; and the alternation between uncertainty, fear, desire and duty tortures me. What a long way off Russia is ! It seems to me that it would be just as easy to journey to the moon. Will you be at Johannesburg on June 8 ? It would be about that time that I might be going through.

London, June 17.

You will have had my letter from Dover, instead of me. It remains for me to explain the reason for the change. In a word, I think I am pregnant. I suspected it before I started. The doctors saw no objection to my undertaking the journey notwithstanding. I yielded to their advice ; but when, after the first day, I was obliged to go to bed, my husband saw that the trip was positively absurd, and possibly dangerous for me. So we gave it up. I say weakly that I may perhaps embark ; but, between ourselves, it will come to nothing. Two kinds of sickness would not do for me.

I had been keeping so many things till I saw you, that now I am quite bewildered as to what I have to relate. One must write every day as I used to do, or be able to talk. Gaps in a correspondence are fatal to detail. Where am I to take up my journal again ? I am in difficulties, like an author over his preface.

Well, let me begin with the King. I had a long talk with him at Windsor. I will spare you the affectionate messages with which he entrusted me. Binder will deliver them in more sonorous phrases than mine. Through Binder,

June 1824]

CANNING

too, he will have sent a recapitulation of his principles. I will go on to what I was more anxious to hear from his lips after six months' absence. I wanted him to talk about Canning ; and I could not persuade him to broach the subject. At last, he came to Pozzo, with expressions far from flattering, based on your opinion of him. I said that I did not know whether he deserved your prejudice against him or not ; that there was another person whom you liked still less ; but that I did not know if I dared to name him to the King. "Name him, name him, for I hate him as much as ever." I was rejoiced to hear him say this ; for I had been given reason to believe, since my arrival, that the favourite had Canning's interests very much at heart, and that she had even gone so far as saying that, if the Ministers were to split, she would be on Canning's side. Possibly, the courage which the King displayed proceeded from the fact that we were alone. However, it is a good thing I was there to note it.

He talked, at length, of affairs. Your scorpion-catcher would talk more sensibly, and, no doubt, with more knowledge of geography ; for there came a moment when Chili, Peru, Mexico and Columbia were a seaport—a single seaport.

I will pass on to the Opposition. You see how they are flattering Mr. Canning ; here are their true relations. He has been cajoling Sir James Mackintosh and Lord Lansdowne ; and he has won over the former so completely that Mackintosh is convinced he will be made a Minister at the first opportunity. Lord Grey came to see me the other day, looking very solemn and secretive, and told me that I should be very much surprised, now that I was back, by the changes I should find ; and then he stopped, protesting that he would say no more. I promised myself secretly that he should tell me everything before he left the room. And, indeed, he began by remarking that a crisis was inevitable, in view of

Lord Liverpool's health ; that he would die or be compelled to retire ; that his successor could be none other than Mr. Canning ; that, once at the head of the administration, he would get rid of all his inconvenient colleagues, that is to say, nearly all the Ministers ; that he would take Lord Lansdowne and Mackintosh into partnership, and that he himself might be persuaded to join in, if he found that, at bottom, Canning's opinions satisfied his political conscience ; that the post he would prefer would be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ; and that he was convinced that what he had always told me would then come to pass—namely, that England would strengthen her bonds of friendship with Russia.

Later on, I discussed all this with the Duke of Wellington. He told me that Liverpool's retirement was probable, and that already a large body, headed by the Duke of York, had urged him to make ready to have himself appointed Prime Minister ; but that he had replied curtly that, until his colleague retired, he refused to lay himself open to the suspicion of coveting his cast-off office ; that, when the time came, he would know what to do, and that would be to await the King's commands. Now, he went on, if the King appointed Canning, it would then be time to inform His Majesty of our determination not to serve under him ; but things cannot come to that pass. Even Canning could not think so. Our party is too strong ; we cannot be defeated ; for a Government is maintained only by the Commons ; and the Commons are for us, not for Mr. Canning. "No, no, no ! Impossible ! Out of the question ! He would be thrown out twenty times before one of us budged. As for the Opposition, he is hoodwinking them, in good faith or on purpose. But it is certain that he is in touch with them, and that Mackintosh never makes a move that is not agreed on with him."

I ventured the suggestion that the Duke of Wellington's

lack of practice in Parliamentary debate might be against his becoming Prime Minister. He told me, No : "To begin with, I can learn : if I want it, it will come back to me. And, even if I can't, the Duke of Portland had no more idea of speaking than I have ; and yet he was at the head of the administration."

The 19th.

We have the King and Queen of the Sandwich Islands here. Mr. Canning tried to please Their Majesties ; but it was not a success. He invited them to a reception. The King's sisters were there. Everyone stared in the most unparalleled way ; only the English can stare so. A few people, led by me, ventured to laugh ; and the savages fell flat. I fancy there will be no more talk of them except at Covent Garden or Astley's Circus.

The 28th.

Yesterday, the Duke of Wellington gave a great dinner for the King. It was the first time, for three years, that His Majesty had dined out. He was absolutely delighted at my mishap. He finds me a useful piece of furniture. I understand him ; and, time after time, I arrange things and do things which he has not told me to do, but which I have read in his face. He has a great deal of tact ; and nothing is lost on him. It was an amusing evening. There were many faces there that he did not like, and many others that embarrassed him. His family for instance ; so he deserted them unceremoniously, and settled down between his mistress and myself. Canning was at dinner. The King never stopped making jokes about him to me. He remarked, very rightly, that Canning is too gushing, that he hates me, and overwhelms me with attentions. The natural result of embarrassing

someone is to be perfectly at ease oneself. At any rate, that is what I have always felt. So our relations are very amusing. All the time that he is hating me and feeling embarrassed, he tries to be witty and makes clever remarks. But he is one of those men who always kill any conversation. You have continually to begin again ; and I get bored.

London, July 2.

London is in the last throes of pleasure. All the mothers and all the daughters fret themselves, wear themselves out, make themselves thin. The roses in their cheeks fade, and the suitors do not appear. That is always the story with the London season. I am very angry with Neumann for not sending you a courier. Mr. Canning is holding him up. I spin out my letter and you get nothing, neither Mr. Canning's rubbish nor my complaints.

July 4.

I am adding a line to this big letter, to tell you that England is sending 6000 Hanoverian troops to Portugal. Bravo, she is on our side ! What has become of the Ministers' speeches against the principle of intervention and occupation ? Afterwards, one reflects sadly on the wretched governments everywhere who have recourse to foreigners to insure their existence : the Austrians in Naples, the French in Spain, the English in Portugal. But never mind about reflections. England is once more linked up with the European system.

Canning dined with us yesterday. He talked and asked questions with a vengeance. He spoke to me about everybody except you ; he never mentions your name. Pozzo took us a good quarter of an hour. He believes that he had a great deal to do with Villèle's fall, and that Chateaubriand's was like a bolt from the blue to him. "However,"

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he went on, "we know all this only from indirect sources ; Stuart never tells us anything, for the simple reason that he knows nothing."

The 11th.

The Queen of the Sandwich Islands has died from the after-effects of measles. All the talent of the English doctors was of no avail with a constitution that belonged to another hemisphere. The King is prostrate with grief, because his four other wives are not with him, and in the whole of Europe he cannot find a substitute for a Sandwich woman. This one, the smallest of the five, was taller and stronger than the most enormous man. In that country, they choose them by weight and size.

The 15th.

The King of the Sandwich Islands has died of measles too.

London, July 20.

Yesterday, I went to a colossal reception at the Marchioness of Hertford's. Canning, who hardly ever goes into society, put in an appearance. He came up to me with his usual alacrity and then stood rooted to the ground at my side, looking wretchedly awkward, as he always does. After a little while, I invited him to sit by me ; he accepted this favour with a humility and a gratitude that were really quite funny. We had been talking epigrams for ten minutes when I caught sight of Wellington : "Ah," I said, "there is your successor." I can't tell you how his face fell at the word "successor" ; he looked at me with astonishment, and I went on quickly, "because we can't leave him standing up."

Canning does me the honour of seeing, or trying to see, wit in everything I say. He has a kind of fear of me which makes him unable to keep away from me. The truth is that there is a sort of attraction about the people one hates. However, he amuses me much more than I amuse him.

The 22nd.

The Ministers are still holding Cabinet meetings four or five hours a day, I don't know what about. Wellington is still in a bad temper ; the funny thing is that Canning is too. The Duke of York is furious about all that has happened. I dined with him and the other two yesterday. Speaking of Cabinet meetings, he said : "A fine lot of use it is holding them to decide something, and then undeciding it." I told him that his remark reminded me of a caricature executed in St. Petersburg during the reign of Paul I ; he was represented holding an order in each hand ; on one was written "order," on the other "counter-order," and on his forehead was "disorder." The Duke of York went off into a peal of laughter fit to wake the dead. Canning asked what was the joke ; without a moment's hesitation I told him. Everyone burst out laughing. Canning had to laugh too ; but he was furious. Wellington observed the other day, with regard to the Portuguese affair : "What a noble, what a generous figure we are cutting ! An unlucky King, who thinks rightly that he is surrounded by dangers, asks protection and help of his oldest ally. We reply, Yes ; you shall have it, if France will give it instead of us ; but, if France agrees not to help you, we shall leave you in the lurch too, and you can get out of your difficulties as best you may. Well, I have told the Cabinet what I thought. Nobody had a word to say in reply ; but no-one would support me."

Aug. 1824]

WINDSOR

August 1, 1824.

We have just come back from Windsor, where we have been for a week. From nine in the morning till midnight, I was surrounded by people. I could not find five minutes even to read the newspapers—a daily luxury and a daily necessity so far as I am concerned—much less to write, and least of all to write to you. But I thought of you and busied myself on your behalf; I talked and got others to talk. I began by looking after the interests of the Prince of Schönburg. The King invited him at my request and kept him there two days, which gave your Schönburg a prodigious idea of my omnipotence. The King spoke much of you. He likes you. He is very angry with France, and very distrustful. He complains in particular of M. de Villèle. He does not like M. de Polignac either.

My little George came to stay at Windsor. He behaves very well at Court; and, as he amuses the King, the whole Court adores him.

The 2nd.

The months go by. Many more will pass before we shall find even a chance of meeting. It is a sad thought; but there is something soothing in the impossible. Taking it all in all, I fancy that hope kills more than it keeps alive. Great mental excitement wears out the body. At any rate, my poor body cannot keep up with my mind. If I am to be well, I prefer to want nothing, decide nothing, like nothing. I can see that the life of a dormouse would suit me very well.

The Duke of Wellington, whom I saw yesterday, is very much concerned with a Court intrigue which is greatly agitating the King. Mr. Canning is trying to get rid of the son of the Marchioness of Conyngham, while at the same time loading him with favours. He wants to create a post

of Under-Secretary of State, resident with the King, which would make Francis into the only channel of communication between the King and his Government. The young man is no use in the office ; but Canning thinks he is his man and that he will be of the greatest service to him with the King. As he can never approach the King himself, he thinks it is important to have a reliable person in that quarter who would paint things to the King in whatever colours Canning wishes. The mistress wants this done because it means a salary of £2000 ; and money is always the surest way to her heart. But this is the difficulty : the man-midwife, who is really Prime Minister, who holds the State documents and is in a position to transmit the King's commands to his Ministers, has asked to be made Privy Councillor. The Ministers see that it would have the advantage of putting him on oath and binding him to secrecy. Mr. Canning, who regards him as his declared enemy, said curtly that he would never consent. The refusal naturally irritated the man-midwife, and he is not a man who can be offended with impunity. To get out of the difficulty, Canning has offered the post to the worthy man in another form. The hesitation of the King and his lady proceeds from their fear of the doctor. The latter has just gone to Bagnères ; whither he has taken the Marchioness's son, who is dying. Wellington has begged the King to decide nothing until he is back ; he is afraid of him too. Canning has thus sowed the seeds of discord at Court ; we shall see if it will do him any good. It is very amusing to follow this circle of intrigues.

Wellington did not tell me till yesterday that, for a year, he has been on bad terms with Liverpool. This is the reason. When they took Canning as a colleague, they bound themselves to agreement on any proposal of his ; and they had kept strictly to this principle until a year ago. At that time, the Duke, who was at Cheltenham, wrote to Lord Liverpool

about a certain proposal of Canning's and indicated how he might counter his plans, urging him not to listen to the specious arguments by which Canning would try to back them up. Lord Liverpool showed the letter to Mr. Canning ; as a result, Canning had a very heated argument with the Duke. Since then, he and Liverpool do not speak to one another, except at Cabinet meetings.

The 4th.

There was an amusing scene in my house yesterday. Esterhazy had not been here for a week. In the interval, there had appeared that article in the papers about the exclusion of Lord Holland from the Austrian States, and all the commentaries and all the idiocies that resulted. I had heard before that he had consulted Canning about what he ought to do (fancy consulting Canning !) and that it had been agreed to publish a flat denial of the article. . . . However, Esterhazy came to see me yesterday and mentioned the article. I remarked that the form was clearly wrong but that I believed it was true in substance, and that, in any case, it would make an excellent impression. While I was talking, the Duke of Wellington came in and began on the same subject, saying : "Well, that is excellent ; mark my words, no-one will ever again dream of saying a word against the Allied Sovereigns in Parliament" ; then, turning to Esterhazy : "Prince, you must not say a word in reply. First, one should never flatter newspapers by entering into an argument with them ; secondly, the facts are true because Prince Metternich told me so himself ; third, and most important, it will have excellent results for everybody. It is the best way of shutting up talkative critics." Esterhazy went as red as a lobster. He looked at the clock, wriggled like an eel, suddenly said a hurried good-bye and bolted.

Wellington looked at me in astonishment. I began to laugh. "Don't worry," I said, "the trouble is that the denial has gone to the newspapers; the evening paper comes out at three o'clock, and it is two o'clock now. He has gone to stop publication." I never saw a man so much amused as Wellington; he could not get over it. In fact, the paper did not publish a word on that subject, though it was to have contained Esterhazy's reply.

Brighton, August 18.

I came here three days ago. I do nothing but look at the sea and the clouds, yawn over the Duke of York's long stories, and sometimes make fun of Schönburg, though I always come back to a feeling of friendliness when I remember that his face is one you often see. He followed me here. It is persistent of him and rather silly; but never mind. Esterhazy wants to come too. Frederick Lamb has arrived; so we are in force. Talking of him, I regard his romance as over. The lady is simply a coquette. As I rather suspected this, I advised Lamb to bring things to a head and find out where he stood. The test worked. She wants him to adore her; but she does not want to marry him. As his adoration was somewhat lukewarm, it will not be difficult for him to stop adoring her altogether. So he will be going to Spain; but not for two months.

The Francis Conyngham affair is not coming off. The mistress is terrified of the man-midwife. She does not want her son to get in his way, and even the £2000 could not dispel her fears. There's a man who really has to be reckoned with. Everyone is afraid of him, from the King downwards. He controls newspapers, caricatures, public business. He works underground. He will hear of Canning's plans, and will remember them against him.

Yesterday, I had a very amusing scene with the Duke of York. We were talking about the Government, and he began to tell me some complicated story which I could not follow. The story went on, growing more and more involved, so I decided to stop listening, but preserved a lofty air of concentrated attention. He asked me, every now and then, if I was following. "Perfectly, Sir, I understand every word." At the end of his speech, he took me by the hand and said : "Now, my dear Countess, I have told you my greatest secret ; and I give you my word that I have confided my plan to nobody else in the world. Pledge me your word of honour that you will not repeat it to a living soul, for you see how important it is." If anyone were ever put out of countenance, I was then. Alas, the promise I made him cannot be broken ; I have no idea what he told me. This shows one should never give in to boredom. For the future, I shall listen to Schönburg without letting my mind wander, even when he is not talking about you ; for, up to now, that is the only subject to which I have paid any attention. Then I listen with such attention and pleasure that he thinks he is making some slight progress, and his hopes soar. If he changes the subject, I begin to yawn again ; for nobody has ever made me yawn as much as he does. His voice is so soporific ; and he always finishes the sentence no matter how bored one looks. I am sure that you have never let him talk to you ; it would have killed you.

My life here flows on pleasantly and indolently. In the morning, I go and sit by the sea. I come back for lunch, and receive the Duke of York and a few members of his circle. At four o'clock, I take a carriage and go for a drive. At seven o'clock, we always dine with Lamb and the rest of our group ; and then, as we have said everything to one another during the day, we play whist to pass the time till eleven o'clock, when I retire to bed. I do not care for

cards, but I go on in my own manner. I am amused by the importance others attach to the game, and by their exasperation, tempered with good breeding. It is a very animal life ; but it suits me.

Windsor, the 30th.

I have been at Windsor since yesterday. Nobody could rush about more than I do. The King is in an excellent temper, as much in love as ever and very comfortable in his love. Here's to English love-affairs ; they are the only really convenient kind. How well they are arranged !

The doctor is back. The King and his mistress take all the credit for opposing Mr. Canning's plans. Obviously, the more they try to justify themselves, the more they will put the blame on the Minister, so that the man-midwife will not forgive him. He is here, which is unusual ; for generally he disappears as soon as there is company. When he is at table, he sits opposite the King, with a pitying look for everybody and for everything that is said. He has sharp eyes. He smiled at several compliments I paid the King. I do not know if that meant that he was laughing at me or that he thought I was laughing at the King. If he stays we shall get to know one another. Canning has had a bilious fever. It was not enough to kill him ; what an opportunity missed !

September 2.

Canning is leaving for Ireland in a few days. He will make speeches, that is to say he will commit indiscretions, and they are on the look-out here for the first he commits. The cabal against Canning grows in strength. The doctor speaks openly against him. The King said to me yesterday : "He is a scoundrel, and I hate him more every day." This is what I believe to be the object of Canning's trip to Ireland.

He is on good terms with the Marquess Wellesley. He will confer with him on the subject of making him Prime Minister when Liverpool retires, which is expected to happen soon. It would be an ingenious plan ; for, on the one hand, Wellesley is the patron of the man-midwife, who owes to him all his good fortune ; on the other, he is close to the Duke of Wellington, and it would be difficult for the latter to oppose his advancement. However, all this means nothing. The doctor will readily sacrifice his benefactor, and the Duke does not love his brother. The Ministers hate him ; in fact, it won't do ; but I think he will try.

I must tell you of my successes, so as better to prepare you for my fall. The King is paying me a great deal of attention. I am filling out, and my arms are getting plump ; in fact, I am developing quite to his taste. He talks to nobody but me. The Marchioness is annoyed ; and, yesterday, she could not contain herself. The King was sitting up later than usual ; and I was seated by him at the window. The Marchioness was sulking by the garden door. Suddenly, she got up and went out on to the lawn. I was the first to notice it, and I told the King. He took fright and rose ; so did I. We went out to look for her. It was dark. He brought her back and scolded her. She replied that, if the King was busy, she had a right to go out. The evening came to an end suddenly. I withdrew, to give them a chance of an explanation ; which, with lovers, means reconciliation. The result is that I shall be in her bad books.

On the other hand, the Duke of York has resumed his attentions. The King had arranged a hunting-party for him. He asked to be excused, so that he could take me for a drive. That caused a little access of royal jealousy. I laugh at all this ; and, next to me, my husband is the one who laughs most. We spent the evening, and the greater part of the night, upon the lake. It was glorious weather and stiflingly

hot. We dined on the grass, and re-embarked by moonlight. The King began to talk about religion. The lovely lake, the lovely forest on its banks, the moon over all—everything had tended to inspire him. If I were to repeat his harangue, we should both lose our respect for religion. Indeed, I stuffed my handkerchief into my mouth so as not to burst out laughing. He began to sing and made me sing with him. It was as good as a comedy.

The 4th.

Another excitement ! Great uproar, whispering, consultations, vexation, rejoicing, resolution, indecision, cowardice, courage—in a word, insanity, super-insanity ; and I don't see how it is to end. The favourite is going to Italy ; the King is going to Italy. He is leaving his kingdom in the lurch. The Duke of Wellington said to him : “Very well, Your Majesty, abdicate ; for, unless you do, go you cannot.” The Marchioness is angry ; the daughter is in tears ; and I simply laugh. They sent for Halford ; he said that the climate would do the King good, but that he is well enough not to need it. The man-midwife is on the Duke of Wellington's side and is against the trip. All the fuss is caused by the condition of the favourite's eldest son. He is dying. The man-midwife left him at Bagnères. Thence he went to Italy. The day before yesterday, the news was grave. His mother insists on going out to him ; but she wants the King to go with her ; for, while she was away, his incomparable love might be directed towards someone else ; and, though she can do without sentiments, she can't do without diamonds. She does not love him, and shows her distaste for him ; he sees it, but although he thinks she is a fool, and has told me so a score of times, he feels he is too old to contract fresh habits ; and a habit he must have. Wellington and I have

been laughing together like children. This really is a mad-house.

The 13th.

The heat is over, and I am not sorry. It was the severest heat-wave recorded in England for a long time. At the Cottage, it was enough to kill you. One day, a crowd of us were in a little boat. I was sitting between the King and the Duke of York, wedged betwixt their perspiring royal thighs; and heat and disgust made me feel really ill. I told my husband in Russian what was the matter. He extricated me from my torrid situation and put me by him at the front of the boat, on the pretext that there was more air there. Heaven preserve you from the knees of the King and the Duke of York, especially in 25° of heat.

London, October 8.

Windsor was very interesting. A bold piece of intrigue nearly came off; but I think the evil has been averted. Canning wanted to go to Paris to pay his respects to the King.¹ For the first time, Liverpool opposed him, pointing out that his presence in Paris would be ill-advised. The King wanted Wellington to go. Canning formally opposed the choice, and, as a compromise, decided on Granville. A few days later, he announced that he wanted to go and see him in Paris and that, if he went as a private traveller, his presence could have no political significance. On the day we arrived at Windsor, I heard of it, at the same time as the Duke of Wellington, who told me that, besides saying he was going to see Granville, Mr. Canning was using the excuse of your own journey to Paris—I do not know how the news had leaked out. I have my personal suspicions,

¹ Charles X, who succeeded Louis XVIII in 1824.

which I shall investigate. The fact is, that I had not spoken of my conjectures to anyone, except Wellington and Neumann. However, there were rumours and uneasiness. As soon as I heard, I spoke very strongly to Wellington, remarking that, if they let Canning create a scandal of this kind, it would make all the Cabinets distrustful and suspicious ; that even if, as he maintained, Canning's journey had no political significance, or even if his intrigues in Paris should fail, the disturbance and perturbation would be widespread ; and that, at any cost, the journey must be prevented : the King could forbid it and Wellington speak up against the project. I told him, also, that to use your journey as an excuse was absurd, that he had only to ask Esterhazy, who could not possibly know anything about it ; for he had not had time to hear from Vienna since the news of the death of the King of France ; that, in any case, if you were to make the journey, Mr. Canning would learn of it in time to take steps. After all this, Wellington decided to write to Canning. He read me his letter ; it was very strong. Anyhow, you were only another excuse. Canning wants to go to Paris for purposes of intrigue. He wants to inveigle France into recognising the American republics. He wants, above all, to sow the seeds of distrust among the Cabinets, to make ruptures, to bring them back to the former policy of the time of George II. That is what he is after.

The King still sticks to his Italian tour. Wellington does not know what to do ; he is seriously afraid that this mad idea may be put into action. Now His Majesty wants to take his fat self straight to Naples, and spend the winter there. Wellington told him, the other day, that, if his mind were made up, it was time for him to consider what administrative measures were to be taken for the period of his absence ; that, if he was out of England for the Opening of Parliament, he must appoint a Regent, and that the people would of

course expect to see the heir-presumptive to the throne invested with the title. He knew that was a sensitive spot. The King got angry and said that the choice depended entirely on his wishes, and that he would appoint whom he liked. Wellington made a very good reply : "*There are things, Sir, which you can do, but you ought not to do.*" He hopes that this consideration will cool the King's ardour ; for he is very jealous of his brother. Their relations are strange. They are afraid of one another ; they have no affection for one another, no esteem ; and yet they are always making up to one another. The Duke of York attaches importance to the King's favour, the King, to his brother's moral support. They make fun of one another ; they confide in me on this, as on many other equally delicate subjects.

You know that the King wants to keep Esterhazy here ; he beams on him. There was a tender reconciliation between them ; and their old quarrel has ended, like a lovers' quarrel, in redoubled affection. Esterhazy, for his part, badly wants to stay ; but he is afraid you will criticise his changes of front. Indeed, the difficulties have been exaggerated. We shall be delighted to keep him ; and I shall only regret Madame Apponyi, whom I should have found good company as a colleague—something I have never yet encountered in my diplomatic career.

I am going to broach a subject about which I feel strongly. Go back to your good relations with Wellington. You have no idea how capable he is in affairs and how right in principle ; to what an extent he is our sole support ; what services he does us ("us" means your Ambassador and mine). I wish you would treat him with a little friendship ; I am sorry to see that he still feels the coolness which sprang up between you at Verona. It is difficult for him to open his heart to me on this subject ; but the King has spoken to me about it. He tells me that Wellington complains of no longer

possessing your confidence, that it worries him, and that I ought to work on him to get that idea out of his head, and on you to make some advance towards him. I repeat all this to you, frankly and without concealment. Forget the Wellington of Verona ; I assure you that he is no more like that, than I am like M. Tatischeff. He is the only check we have on Mr. Canning's follies. The latter hates him ; but he fears him. He will never run counter to his opinions, nor will he allow himself to take any important step without his consent. Wellington is utterly without fear ; he writes to Canning, remonstrating with him on his conduct ; Canning does not reply, but he submits ; and, at the first opportunity, Wellington starts again. I told you about the rebuke the King administered to Canning before he left for Ireland. He added that it was Wellington who had advised him to administer it. That was either clumsiness or treachery ; but, at least, it shows that the King, too, finds that Wellington is the sole power who can be pitted against Canning. Our friend has a difficult part to play ; but his reputation for honesty and sincerity, and above all his lucky star, help him to carry it off with a great measure of success.

October 12, 1824.

Yesterday, we went to a big dinner-party at Mr. Canning's. It must be very entertaining to see us together—he attentive to excess, I polite but cold ; both ready, on every possible occasion, to say the most biting things to one another. We always talk like people who are afraid both of forgetting something, and even breathing its name. A hint from one suggests endless meanings to the other. Probably, we are always quite innocent ; but it would be impossible to look more guilty. In short, it is a war, both in small and in great things, waged without truce or respite.

Oct.—Nov. 1824]

VISITING

Hatfield, October 14.

I brought the Ozarovskys here to show them what life in an English country house is like. We are a large party—here are diplomats, Ministers, pretty women, jealous husbands, perfumed dandies, long dark corridors, chapels, towers, bats in the bed-curtains—everything you need for a romance, or, at any rate, for an affair. I am bored, because I am not having one. The owner of the place¹ has the largest house, the largest chin, and the smallest stature you could possibly imagine. His wife has plenty of money, big languishing eyes and big teeth. She is lucky enough to fancy she is beautiful, and unlucky enough not to be. She is not without intelligence, but entirely without charm.

London, November 2.

I have left this letter since the 14th of last month. I did it purposely at first ; I meant to sulk, and show you that I am not so communicative that I can do without a reply. Then, I was prevented by a violent attack of inflammation of the lungs, which came out of the blue, and from which I was unable to escape till I had been severely bled ; which left me very weak. Your long letter reached me in the middle of all this. It was just the length it ought to have been, and it gave me immense pleasure. I have a thousand questions to answer and a thousand things to tell you ; but I am so weak that I don't know how to manage, what with my mind being so active and my arm being in a sling. I spent a week at Windsor. It was there I fell ill. The King was kind enough to do more than look anxious ; I think he really was anxious. He took every possible care of me ; I found it very convenient to be ill while staying with a King. I love people to make a fuss of me ; and his example set the

¹ Lord Salisbury.

whole Court doing the same. I had never been bled before in my life. He wanted me to have it done in his presence ; there was a little scene, from which I emerged without honour, for I was childishly afraid. However, that is enough about my arm and the King.

Canning has answered the famous letter, in which Wellington remonstrated with him about his plan of going to Paris. He said, among other things : "*I wonder how your Grace could make such a gross blunder as writing to me such a letter.*" Further on, he overwhelms him with sarcasms. In short, the letter is highly impertinent. I have learned what its gist was from someone who read it. The Duke has not shown it me. He contented himself with saying that Canning had written him "a devil of a letter," and that they were on the worst possible terms. Canning must feel himself in a very strong position to have the audacity to write it, and, alas ! Wellington must be in a weak position to have swallowed it. There are two melancholy truths. In any case, relations are very strained ; they must break it off altogether or come to an agreement. Things cannot go on like this. The King is furious with Canning, and hates him more and more ; but the King is weak.

London, November 24.

I have not written to you, because my mind has been full of my son and all my time taken up by him. He has left for Russia. You don't know what such a separation means to a mother—how all her thoughts are concentrated on it ; how afraid she is of forgetting some piece of advice which might be useful, or some detail about the journey. Everything becomes important ; and I felt that all my mind and all my time were not sufficient to think of everything and do everything. My health has suffered from his going less

than I had feared. The preparations were much more painful than the actual separation. The anticipation of pain is always worse to me than the pain itself. Now I am thinking how necessary the journey was ; I recognise all its advantages ; I think of the moment when I shall see him again and I feel resigned. The moment he left, I went away to Lady Cowper's country house ; the air and a little company did me good. I came back yesterday.

In the absence of Wellington, who is out of town, I am making use of the Duke of York. He is always in good spirits. According to him, a rupture would be bound to bring about the downfall of Mr. Canning. He does not admit the possibility of a Government that would not include Wellington. Meanwhile, the quarrel between the two has achieved the greatest possible publicity. According to the Duke of York, Lord Liverpool has grown rather colder towards Mr. Canning ; and, in the Cabinet bickerings, he regards him as the mean between what are called the Ultras and the Liberals. The latter consist of Mr. Canning, Robinson,¹ Huskisson and Lord Melville. The Ultras are the Chancellor, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Westmorland, Bathurst, Peel, Lord Sidmouth and Lord Bexley.² If Mr. Canning wins, there is no doubt that he will put Lord Lansdowne, Tierney and Mackintosh into the Cabinet. An arrangement with them is quite possible ; but it could not be extended to Lord Grey and Lord Holland.

November 24, 1824.

I do not regard Mr. Canning's recent explanations about the question of Greece as categorical. You will see that the

¹ The Hon. F. J. Robinson. Became Prime Minister on Canning's death in August 1827. Later created Earl of Ripon.

² "Little Vansittart," recently raised to the peerage.

Ministers, when they meet again, will want to re-examine the whole question. Meanwhile, our two Ambassadors are as quiet as mice. I do not approve of this. Why such care to preserve the secrecy which Canning has asked of them on this subject? Why not seek to enlighten the minds of the other Ministers and of the King? Mr. Canning's argument seems plausible: "Neither the Turks nor the Greeks want us to intervene; very well then, we withdraw." It is logical enough; but if one looks at the results of this determination, if one considers that the withdrawal breaks the last bond uniting England to the policy of the Continent, then the matter takes on a different complexion. It means a complete revolution in the political system of Europe; it means the breaking up of the Alliance; in a word, it means that Mr. Canning gets his own way; and this is why it seems to me essential that it should be presented for the consideration of the Cabinet.

December 4, 1824.

The Cabinet has met. I had a long talk with Wellington after the first Council. He looked worried and exceedingly agitated; Canning's very name gets on his nerves. After repeating to me that nothing was happening, that we must be calm, he was obliged to admit that Mr. Canning had taken advantage of the long separation of the Ministers to upset nearly everything. "He is on the point of burning his fingers in thirty different ways."—"Well, let him burn them in one, and throw him out."—"It is easy to talk," he replied: "but the fire would spread to the whole of England, and we should be the first to burn."—"All the same, how can you let the harm go on without opposing it?"—"Well, suppose I do oppose some piece of folly. They won't give in to me. So, to be consistent, I should have to resign. Are you any

better off?" I did not dare to tell him that folly, with or without him, is still folly.

He admits, for the first time, that Canning has achieved popularity and that his popularity strengthens his position. However, he also admits that Lord Liverpool is no longer as wholly on his side as he was. In the Cabinet, he expressed several opinions of his own. But it seems to me that the others are nothing but figure-heads. He complained bitterly of the King's indiscretions, of the impossibility of getting him to act on account of the constant dread of being compromised by him. His hatred of Canning grows daily; but it shows itself in an extremely ill-advised way. In short, there is no way of using him without courting destruction. All this looks bad. The Cabinet Councils will go on longer than had been expected. There is work to be done on all current questions. I fancy that the Eastern Question will be very much clarified in the Cabinet, and that Mr. Canning's resolutions will be severely amended. But it is difficult to see daylight in that business.

The 9th.

Your No. 160 reached me yesterday. I see from your letter that you have been expending a great deal of activity and energy in working on Mr. Canning's perverse mind. It will have a good effect with us; we shall see what effect it will have here. Meanwhile, Mr. Canning and my husband have not spoken to each other or even met for three weeks, except yesterday at dinner in our house. This is a trifle; but I can't help telling you to give you an idea of the man's position and manners. I had suggested to Mrs. Canning that she should come and dine with me before she left. Her husband was naturally included in the invitation. But the difficulty was—whom to invite with them? Our colleagues

—Yes. But what about English people? All the Ministers have quarrelled with him. There is the same difficulty with members of the social world. I suggested it to several persons; they all begged me to excuse them from meeting him; and there were among them both supporters of the Opposition and Ministerialists. Finally, being unable to inveigle anyone into coming, I begged the Duke of York to get me out of my difficulty. As he is the best fellow in the world, and quite devoted to my service, he came. When Mr. Canning came in and saw him, he retired into the other room and buttonholed the fourth Secretary of the Embassy—Labensky, a little man to whom I have never spoken except to say Good morning. He stayed talking with him alone, until the moment I crossed the room to sit down at table. As I passed, I told him to come and sit by me. He did it so awkwardly that everyone was forced to smile. His timidity, his embarrassment, his indifference, his clumsiness were indescribable. His conversation was one long string of blunders and impertinences. In a drawing-room, all his wit is devoted to making fun of somebody. There is no doubt that he is very amusing when he does it. But you can be sure that his choice of a subject will be ill-advised. Yesterday, he had taken as his victims Lord Westmorland and the wretched *Chargé d’Affaires* for Saxony. Biedermann is a thoroughgoing German, very pedantic, very humble, who does nothing but bow and make long speeches which you must not think of interrupting lest they should go on for ever. He is Canning’s favourite among the diplomats. Whenever Biedermann chooses to come, he receives him and listens to him as long as he chooses to stay. He flatters him; he studies him, and then entertains his guests at dinner with him. Studying him amuses Canning passionately; he does that just as anyone else might go to the theatre.

The 20th.

We were very much on the look-out as the Cabinet meetings drew to a close. They had been extremely stormy ; and Lord Liverpool was deputed to go to the King and obtain his consent to the resolutions of the Cabinet before they separated. The King refused to give it ; and Liverpool came back no better off than he went. The Duke of Wellington then went to the Cottage "to reconcile them," as he said. (What an extraordinary mania for reconciliation !) Indeed, he brought back to the Cabinet the King's ratification of the resolutions they had adopted ; I do not know what they were ; but, from the King's unwillingness, it seems clear to me that they were of Canning's manufacture. So the outcome of all these Cabinet meetings is that they have ended as he wished them to end. What weakness ! The Duke of Wellington was overwhelmed. He claims that he was the only champion of the good cause, and that the meetings of the Ministers were nothing but a dialogue between himself and Canning, with the others as audience. He adds that Canning was so furious with him that, a score of times, he was ready to take him by the throat. What an impressive areopagus !

January 6, 1825.

Thank you for letting me know what you hear from Petersburg concerning the Empress Elizabeth's health. We know nothing about it here. I should not look on her death as a misfortune. The Emperor would marry again, I hope, and two good things would result—an heir who would save us from a disputed succession, for that is what we are faced with today, and at any rate new habits which would bring him into contact with men and would get him out of his present purely idealistic existence—an existence which

means that he sees only illusions, and acts only at their bidding. A man who lives alone is ill-fitted to govern others. It is nearly four months since we had any news from Russia. I understand their silence. The difficulty would be to say anything. Besides, with Cabinets it is sometimes as with individuals who, by not speaking, manage to look shrewd and purposeful. . . .

January 27.

I have seen Wellington. For three weeks, he has been corresponding regularly with Mr. Canning about the Eastern question. Canning wanted to attach himself to us, so as to be able to take a hand in the conference. Wellington pointed out that it would be most ill-advised after his previous curt refusal, observing that he must at least have some excuse, and that he had none. Meanwhile, news came from [*illegible*] announcing that the Ottoman Porte wished for mediation. Canning was triumphant, and told Wellington that there was the excuse. Wellington urged him to seize it quickly, so that he could resume relations with my husband before M. de Lieven received orders from his Court in response to England's foolish affront. Canning let a few days go by. My husband received his despatch and delivered his message. It was too late for Canning to make his proposal. Wellington reproached him with procrastination and was at a complete loss how to proceed. Canning asked for his advice; he replied that he had none to give and that England was in a hopeless fix. They argued. Canning said: "Russia is breaking with us over the Greek question." Wellington maintained that England had been the first to break away, so that their points of departure were absolutely divergent. Wellington remarks that England could not be in a more foolish position. If she stays out of the conference, the

public will say that she has been "*kicked out of it.*" If she returns, they will say that she has done so because of Russia's threat to declare war on the Porte. He can see no alternative. He said to me : "I entirely approve of the Emperor's tone ; he is absolutely right. It is not my place to say so to other people ; but, between ourselves, I entirely agree with him."

You cannot imagine how mad everyone here has gone over the companies in South America. Everybody is buying shares. Everybody, from the lady to the footman, is risking pin-money or wages in these enterprises. Huge fortunes have been made in a week. Shares in the gold-mines of Rial del Monte, bought at £70, were sold, a week later, for £1350. These sudden fortunes, and the passion for speculation, remind one of the Mississippi Bank in the time of the Regency. It was the cause of many of France's misfortunes, both then and later. Will Mr. Canning become the English Law ? ¹

February 4.

The Duke of Wellington will not admit that Canning's popularity makes him master in the Cabinet. He assures me that I am mistaken ; that it is a false glitter which would not take in any sensible person ; that it will all vanish in smoke ; that, if in the present speculations, for which Canning gets the credit, there are immense gains, the losses will be on an equally immense scale ; that the winners may adore him, but that the losers will abominate him ; that he is sure to commit indiscretions in Parliament, and that, when that happens, it will be time to think of getting rid of him ; that he may possibly injure diplomatic relations with the Continent to the extent of isolating England, but that, if he does so, it would be the end of his political career, for

¹ John Law, Scottish financier under the Regency ; responsible for the French "South Sea Bubble."

such a system had all English opinion against it. In fact, before we can get free of this indiscreet Minister, we must continue to go through every sort of trouble . . .

London, March 6, 1825.

I have a fifth son ; it is very stupid. I suffered greatly and for a long time, and I am still so weak on the seventeenth day that I am not allowed to see anyone. So I have not had your letter or any of your news. My husband simply mentioned that you were coming to Paris. I foresaw this journey, as soon as I heard of the danger Madame de Metternich was in. I was sure that you would do all that was humanly possible to go to her, and I am glad to have been right. I shall pray for her. I gain nothing by the journey. I see only too well, from all political precedents, that you will not come to England. You can guess that it makes me hate Mr. Canning more : not that I did not hate him enough already. Sometimes I venture to return to my original argument. You cannot be on worse terms with him than you are. Why not try to improve them by coming ? But this is only a thought that flashes through my mind ; it does not stay there ; and I heave a deep sigh. You will be so near me. I shall find propinquity harder to bear than distance. We are accustomed to our four hundred leagues. How are we to get accustomed to a distance that may be covered in two days ? You will see my friend. Tell her to show you how witty she can be, and to talk to you about me. She will pity me, and I shall envy her. Esterhazy, who has told me where you are to be found in Paris, will have a thousand things to say to you. I am glad that he will be your informant. He is clear-sighted and far-sighted ; and he is neither a disciple nor an admirer of Mr. Canning. That man makes our lives a burden.

March 1825]

WELLINGTON'S PROPHECIES

The 10th.

I am ashamed of writing so much about myself in this letter when all you can think of must be the sad reason that has brought you to Paris. I am thinking about it, too, and with real anxiety. I feel all that you must be feeling. I wish I could be with you; and yet I do not wish it. Nothing must distract you from the sacred duty you are fulfilling. but it distresses me to think that my sympathy might have assuaged your grief, and that I am far from you

I shall not see Wellington till tomorrow. What shall I hear from him? My experience of the last two years has taught me to value his prophecies at what they are worth. The last information I gathered from him, before my confinement, was that the King, the man-midwife, the favourite and the whole gang were beginning to tremble before Canning. So it is not he who is humiliated, but they; and thus is the end of the great drama I promised you. They did not daunt him when they were courageous. Are they likely to overthrow him now they are afraid? So we must put up with this plague until he takes it into his head to break his own neck. . . .

London, March 20.

I live far more in Paris than in London just now, for I feel that my mind and my heart count for much more than my poor body, which still alternates rather wretchedly between a bedroom and a drawing-room. It makes me impatient to think that, at such a short distance, I do not get news from you every day; and I feel that, if I did, I should be wanting it every hour. There is nothing so insatiable as affection. I have nothing newer to talk about today. Although I still see very few people, I had a long talk with the Duke of Wellington yesterday. He told me that he

thought he was out of favour at Court. It is six weeks since he saw the King. This is the result of a blunder by the Duke of York, and has to do with money. The King insists that money saved in the various departments of the Household should go to his privy purse. The Master of the Horse, the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Steward have each supplied their share. Wellington regards the arrangement as unconstitutional. The King, if he wishes to do so, can save by not holding fêtes, by reducing his stable, by doing nothing to embellish his royal residences. All these economies would benefit his private fortune ; and the King of England is not allowed to amass one.¹ What he has proceeds from the State, and must go back to the State. In this case, it is feared that it may go to the mistress. The Duke of York spoke to Wellington about it. They agreed that they must give the King some good advice on this point ; but Wellington wanted to do it with all possible delicacy and discretion. The Duke of York did not mince his words ; he spoke to the man-midwife, using the Duke of Wellington's opinion to back up his own. The man-midwife controls the King's chest, which here is called the privy purse. It would appear that he gave the King to understand that his brother and Wellington had been conferring with the object of controlling his actions. That had rather the air of a plot, and naturally annoyed the King. He has not seen either of them since. It is a pity he is sulking.

The 21st.

There was an amusing scene yesterday. Lord Grey and Los Rios² met in my house. They did not know one another, and I forgot to introduce them. Los Rios took it into his

¹ This is, of course, untrue. The observant reader will have noticed that Madame de Lieven's comments on English affairs are not always free from inaccuracy.

² Spanish Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

head that the Englishman was a rabid Ultra, and, as he is always anxious to agree with everyone, he began to talk extravagant royalism, just as he sometimes talks liberalism. I tried to calm him down, but in vain. Lord Grey, who is strangely shy with people he does not know, did not say a word, but looked questioningly at me. His silence made Los Rios think that he was not saying enough, and he piled it on thicker. It was a comic scene, still more so when in the course of conversation I addressed Lord Grey by his name. Los Rios was dumbfounded, but still clung to a hope that it might be someone else of the same name. He waited till Lord Grey left to make sure. He had never imagined that I should receive the leader of the Opposition privately, or that his own instinct would have betrayed him.

London, March 22.

I have just heard your sad news. Heavens, how I grieve for you ! There is no consolation for such a sorrow. I do not know what to say, except that my heart is as heavy as yours. Perhaps you will be glad to think that someone else understands your grief. My mind was at rest, as you will have seen from my last letter. A rumour had gone round that she had improved. In absence, one can guess nothing ; and I do not believe in presentiments. How are your poor children ? Victor must be in a terrible state. She loved him so much. Still, he is already at an age when a mother's tenderness is a pleasure but no longer a necessity. But those poor little girls ! What a loss ! If I had any right to ask you for them, how tenderly I should care for them ! The children of Madame de Metternich would always be dear to me. I promised her that, in the last letter I wrote her ; she did not answer. Can I ever forget all she did for my son ? Are you taking your daughters to Milan ? I wish you would.

Write to me often. I am sure that will relieve you, for I know you are very unhappy.

The 25th.

Wellington came to tell me that he was going to write to you to suggest a new plan of travel, which is this : you would embark at Dieppe and come to Brighton, where I should be and Wellington too. Thence, you would go to Windsor, and you would leave England without going to London and consequently without seeing Mr. Canning. He thinks it is an admirable plan, because it would please your friends and infuriate your enemy ; and he is so delighted with his idea that he does not doubt for a moment that you will jump at it. Alas, you are too wise ever to jump at anything.

The King came to town the day before yesterday. He treated the Duke of York very badly and Wellington pretty coldly. Canning has made a long reply to the last Spanish Note, which acknowledged the receipt of the English communication on the subject of the recognition of the colonies. This reply is said to be full of recriminations on the score of legitimism. It is a kind of declaration of the principles of England, as opposed to the principles of the Alliance. Los Rios received the document gaily and complimented Canning on drawing it up. I assure you that, in his own way, Los Rios is quite as entertaining as Mr. Canning. The Good God did not put him into the world to represent Spain. Anyway, I should be sorry if he were withdrawn. He amuses me ; and, at a certain hour of the day, I have the pleasure of knowing that he is certain to call and certain to be gay. We hear that you are fraternising with M. de Villèle. Tell me about him : is he a man of wit, of brains, or merely a charlatan ? What do you think of him ?

April 1825]

BRIGHTON

Brighton, April 8, 1825.

I have been here for a week gazing at the French coast. In ten hours, I could cross the intervening distance. Another ten hours would bring me to Paris : and here I stay. What a poor creature a woman is !

Esterhazy has been back for a week. I had hoped that he would come to see me here, to give me your letter ; but he is not as impatient as I am. Meanwhile, Neumann has left without taking you anything from me ; and, in spite of the short distance that separates us, we have not succeeded in corresponding as half London and half Paris do. We are too proud to permit ourselves such a vulgar pleasure ; and you preferred to preserve the usual degree of separation. So your journey has not even given me the pleasure of a more rapid exchange of letters.

April 21.

Wellington gave me your letter to read ; it is perfect. He is simple-minded enough to feel pleased with it. I notice that all the pointed remarks aimed at him he evades by putting the blame on Canning, as if there were not others who deserved a share. Never mind, it keeps our friend in a good temper. He has not made it up with the King. On the contrary, it seems to me that his ill-temper increases. Mr. Canning has become friendly, at least in his talks with my husband.

I see that, from the heights of diplomacy, you are descending to the romantic. Why are you going to the fountain of Vaucluse ? Who is the Laura you will think of on your way ? Do you find red hairs on your tablets ? You are going to see Nîmes and its amphitheatre : you will remember the amphitheatre of Verona. I am glad to know you are off. There is nothing like travelling to make one forget the

cares of political life. You pack away your mind in your luggage—but not your heart ; that you leave open to all kinds of pleasant and gentle thoughts. If you have any, I shall be included, I am sure.

April 27.

Read the speech of the Duke of York in the House of Lords. His pronouncement against the Catholics is making a stir. Afterwards, read Brougham's attack on him next day in the House of Commons. As the Catholic question is now situated, the Duke of York's position and his public profession of faith must considerably affect its success. Emancipation will never come in his time. He has made it up with the King. The latter has given him some land in Nova Scotia. Mines will be exploited there ; and, at last, the Duke will be able to pay his debts. They amount to more than £500,000.

May 6.

Forgive me for having neglected you so long. I have had so many wretched little duties that it would have been impossible to write two lines together. I have been to other people's parties and to my own ; I have had my little Arthur christened—the least of my cares. Yesterday, I gave a great ball ; for which purpose I had to throw out everything in the house, including myself. I did not go to bed till seven o'clock this morning. The King, too, keeps us up doing nothing. Do you know how I occupy myself sometimes during these receptions ? First of all, I count the candles ; and then I count the little gold balls that decorate the frieze on the ceiling ; and then I examine and compare all the ears in the room, and always find the same ears the prettiest, which gives me a touch of pleasure. Afterwards, I start imagining what other people are thinking about, and I make

May 1825]

MATTERS PERSONAL

up a thousand incredible tales which help to keep me awake. There is always some way of amusing oneself, even when one is most bored. But there is no way of getting fat. My arms are a grief to me ; I hope they will look better when I get a rest travelling ; for, till then, I have nothing to expect but fatigue.

May 9.

Palmella is here. The revolutions have rejuvenated him. He looks extremely well. He is a strange and interesting person to listen to—his intelligence and conversation are all velvet. That does not prevent my thinking that he has made many mistakes ; for he has been more or less the victim of every party. However, Palmella is a very remarkable person, full of wit, resource, perception, shrewdness, ability and vigour, and with a natural gentleness which brings me back to my velvet metaphor. But he is unfortunate and his character is not definite ; it is a little like his way of walking—it waddles.

In order to keep me here, the King has had the idea of holding a Drawing-Room to celebrate his birthday ; and he has arranged it so near the 23rd, the day I leave, that I do not know how to get out of it. Meanwhile, the prospect of leaving keeps me awake at night. I do not know how I can bear to part from my two little children. You cannot imagine how much I love them and how much I enjoy being with them. I told you that I called the youngest Arthur, and that the Duke of Wellington is his godfather. You ought to have seen how important he looked at the christening.

May 16.

In the midst of tears and luggage and dinners and balls, I still find time to read. Madame de Genlis's fourth volume

is detestable. Her style is watery and feeble. It hasn't an idea in it ; in short, she bores me. The first two volumes interested me in spite of their puerility, or possibly because of it ; for they give one an idea of the careless happiness the French enjoyed before, and almost up to the very moment of, their bloody revolution. If you could send me something to read on my journey, I should be very grateful. What am I to do with myself between Berlin and St. Petersburg ?

The 18th.

Mr. Canning is beginning to make me pretty speeches on the eve of my departure. He thinks he can win my heart in five days. I leave definitely on the 24th. I will write to you from Frankfurt ; I will write from Berlin ; and then I shall desert you ; for I shall have other things to do. If you can suggest a meeting, let me know quickly ; for, after the middle of August, your letters will not find me in St. Petersburg—I am speaking of the new calendar. Wish me well ; I am in for a bad time.

Frankfurt, June 29.

It is a long time since I wrote to you ; and, even now, you will get only a wretched short letter. I do not know how I shall send it you ; there is no direct way ; and, since I cannot say all I should like, I must content myself with telling you that, in the end, I left England after a month of terrible anxiety about my little George. He had the infantile fever, a horrible and never-ending complaint which is common in England. I myself was ill, from exhaustion and the anxiety caused by his illness. I was on the verge of a bilious fever ; but, eventually, my sound constitution got the upper hand ; I was ill and had set out, all within the space of four days.

I am spending tomorrow here, to see my brother ; and

June-Oct. 1825]

RUSSIA

then I resume my wretched studious journey. I shall be at Petersburg in the first week in July, new style. I shall stay there six weeks, and hope to be back in England at the end of September. I did not write to you during my son's illness, because I found it impossible to collect my thoughts. I was not myself. You have never known me in sorrow. You do not know how badly I stand up to it. Good-bye.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Reval, September 2.

My visit to Russia is over. It has had very important consequences for me ; and I come back rich, very rich in precious knowledge, rich also in the impression I left behind. I have no time to tell you all that these six weeks have meant. I must take up my story at leisure ; but that cannot be till I reach London, for I shall not have a minute till I get there, and it is a long way. I will tell you what is most urgent ; there is a certain coldness towards you. I beg you to give the matter serious thought. It will take very little to cause real trouble. It seems to me that you ought to adopt conciliatory measures. I had some long talks with the Emperor ; he confides in me. Accept what I tell you at its proper value. Trust in my tact and in my zeal. Do not reply that I am wrong, and that it is you who are right. Even if you are, be quick, waste no time in arguing ; but try to make your peace.

Brighton, October 23.

What a gap in our correspondence, and how many things have happened in the interval ! You will have heard from Prince Esterhazy that I fell ill the day I arrived in London. I made my journey at the speed of a courier. I crossed the

whole of Europe and allowed myself only two diversions, once for the Grand Duchess Marie and once for her sister. Weimar and Brussels took up four days, which were far from restful. My lungs had plenty of exercise and suffered specially at Weimar, where I had to deal with a deaf woman. Finally, I fell sick at Calais, and was seriously ill here for ten days. The sea cured me ; and, after I had paid my respects to the King, I returned. I enjoy the sun and I see no bores ; for I don't see anybody. That suits me ; I am well and I am beginning to write again ; but I don't know how to find the ink and the words to tell you all that I want you to know.

The Emperor took me for a man ; he treated me as one as regards confidence, and as a woman as regards attentions and consideration. I accepted all this with reserve ; but I took advantage of my position to put in a useful word whenever I got the chance.

I have been so far from well since I arrived back that I have seen nobody except Wellington and Canning. The diplomats lost patience. Palmella forced his way into my house ; he thinks he is not bound by the usual rules. As he does not like preambles any more than I do, he asked me point-blank if we should or should not make war. I began to laugh and asked him if he thought I was simple enough to answer that question, and what Turkey had to do with Portugal or Brazil.

You know, people in Russia liked me and spoilt me. The Empress Mother wept when I left. The Grand Duchess Nicolas liked me and showed it. She has natural manners which give her singular charm. Heavens, how gracious and attractive and kind and beautiful she is ! Everybody paid attention to me, more or less. I was jealous of nobody. It was not worth the trouble to disparage me, since I was there only for a few weeks, and people who are leaving soon are



Alexander I, from a volume of drawings by Godby, 1807-09

Nov. 1825]

LORD PONSONBY

always popular. Courtiers resign themselves so easily to praising favourites. I would like to know how long I should have remained in favour, had I stayed ! The Emperor Alexander wanted me to spend the winter in St. Petersburg ; I really believe that, in the whole of his Empire, I was the only person capable of saying "No."

London, November 8.

Twenty-five years ago, Lord Ponsonby was Lady Conyngham's favoured lover. He was away from England when her liaison with the King began, and she had not seen him since. He came back unexpectedly from Corfu, where he has been living for some time. One evening, Lady Conyngham met him unexpectedly in Lady Jersey's drawing-room. She was overcome. The King heard of it at once and was overcome too—so overcome that he sent for Canning, as being the only doctor capable of curing him of a very unpleasant disease. He asked him if he had no post as Minister abroad to give to Lord Ponsonby, who never in his life had thought of adopting a diplomatic career. Mr. Canning tumbled to the situation ; and at once sent for Lord Ponsonby and offered him a post in Brazil, inviting him to await his instructions abroad. Lord Ponsonby, who hasn't a halfpenny, accepted. Canning told the King, who nearly swooned with gratitude ; and, from that moment, everything has been peace and love between them.

So you have seen the man-midwife. Have you ever encountered a mind that made so many leaps and bounds and side-steps ? Anyhow, I can tell you that his popularity is dwindling, and that all these family missions are only excuses to get rid of him. But there is no chance of their dismissing him. He knows too much.

London, January 6, 1826.

I have been too much distressed to be able to write to you. What a frightful blow was waiting for us ;¹ what a bitter grief for me ! So many memories, so many painful reflections pass through my mind, that I am still incapable of thinking clearly. I can think of nothing but our misfortune. I cannot sleep ; I can only weep ; I weep from the bottom of my heart. My unlucky journey to Russia—how that sharpens my grief ! In my leisure at Brighton, I had begun to put in order the very rough notes I had made in Russia on my relations with the Emperor Alexander. I am in possession of a most valuable sketch of his ideas and his political plans, gathered during my long talks with him. Now I take up that work again with religious fervour. I ransack my memory for every phrase he used. I press my conscience into the service ; and I am astonished, as I proceed, to realise to what an extent he confided in me. What freedom, for a man so reserved and so mistrustful ! There is no longer any touch of vanity in what I tell you : all is over. He gave me a new interest in life. I had great political influence over him and I should soon have had more. He was the kind of man liable to become infatuated ; and it was a new experience for him to have political relations with a woman. Here there was no occasion for pride and, possibly, none for distrust ; since a woman's zeal is not suspect. I had mapped out my course and should not have foundered in those dangerous seas. I knew the reefs, or rather the reef, for there was only one. As long as the secret of my influence went no further than ourselves, I should have kept my position. It would have been unique. I believe I should have done good, and I believe it sincerely. Now and for ever, let what I have told you be buried with you. I no more wish

¹ The death of the Emperor Alexander.

for posthumous, than for present, celebrity. My vanity was not excited ; and now I pride myself only on my belief that I was worthy of the position I should have held. You understand me ; and only you must know. You are the only person in the world in whom I confide.

What can have happened in Russia ? We are still in the dark. One thing seems clear, that the Grand Duke Nicolas has shown an energy of character and will which make him fully worthy of the throne he is refusing. I do not know what is in store for us, or if we shall have an opportunity of seeing my prophecy fulfilled ; but I can assure you that, in Nicolas, there is another Peter I. His ability is greater than Alexander's, and his will is like a rock. I saw him in England when he was quite a young man. I saw him again at Spa four years ago, doing musket drill and playing the bugle and rushing about for the rest of the day. Last summer, I saw him nearly every day for five weeks. I had long *tête-à-têtes* with him. He has solid education, accurate judgement, indescribable energy and rapid understanding. He knows everything that happens. He felt the imperfection of the internal policy of Russia under his brother. He bewailed it. He is quick, severe, nothing moves him. His heart is of stone. He has noble ideas. You will see for yourself—if we are destined to see.

January 14.

I am in a very curious position here. My drawing-room is still full. People come to get news, to watch my face, to question me and to wonder. Nobody knows the Emperor Nicolas, and I myself should not know him if I had not come into daily contact with him last summer. I say what I think. Some faces retire behind their cravats, others look incredulous. A few simpletons ask me if he is the kind of man to make war. Aha !

Let us leave the strange spectacle of Russia for a moment, and go on to another, equally strange but not so serious. I mean your Ambassador, or non-Ambassador, here. Listen, there are not two opinions about him : he has covered himself with ridicule. For eighteen months, England and France have been the background of Esterhazy's hesitations. Austrian diplomacy has been kept in suspense. Finally, he makes up his mind. He has his farewell audience ; and, a week later, he decides to stay. Canning jokes in public about it ; everybody laughs ; personally, I am annoyed. I ask nothing better than to keep him as a colleague ; but the way in which all this was done is incredible and very much exaggerated. I cannot understand what would appear such inconceivable levity on the part of your Court. Since he stays, I give you warning of one thing. He is neglecting my husband. I do not know to what extent he is obeying your orders. In any case, it seems to be as well to let you know.

The 16th.

I am sending off my letter. What can I add to it ? I should like to make it interesting ; and I cannot think of anything but Russia. You can imagine that the terrible happenings at St. Petersburg have distressed me deeply. The Grand Duke Nicolas was not beloved by his officers ; and I am convinced that the fear he inspired in them did much to contribute to the occurrences of the 26th.¹ I told my husband, the very first day we heard of his accession to the throne, that there would be trouble in St. Petersburg. He did not believe me. I saw a great deal in the summer, and I can tell you I kept my eyes open. The Emperor Nicolas has plenty of talent, and he will learn to govern and control his natural impetuosity of character. I had some strange conversations

¹ The accession of Nicholas I had been marked by an abortive military revolt.

with him about himself. He said to me one day : "Very well, then, suppose I am all that you say" (I had said nothing particularly outrageous), "I still have one fault : I am not master of my first impulses."—"Bravo, Sire, you are on the way to correcting the fault, once you recognise it yourself."—"That is where you are wrong. I recognise it ; I deplore it ; and it persists."

February 6.

I think your queer Ambassador is at last despatching his courier, so I close this letter. Yesterday, Mr. Canning gave a great dinner for the Ambassadors and their wives, and the Ministers of Columbia, Buenos Ayres and Brazil. I don't know why, but Columbia wanted to sit by my husband. Mr. Canning got up and very politely begged him to leave a chair for the Duke of Wellington, who was expected. There was an amusing moment of awkwardness. The Columbian wears his gloves in his buttonhole, like a posy. Mr. Canning asked me if I knew who the new faces were ; I said, "No," and I did not want to, because I was afraid of meeting bad company in his house. That nettled him. He replied : "At any rate, don't you think they look better than M. Biedermann ?" (the little Saxon Chargé d'Affaires, a frightful person). I replied that his protégés must be in a bad way if they could not shine at the expense of such an individual ; and that brought our conversation to an end. It shows you what good friends we are. He told me that Lord Strangford¹ would be delighted by the recall of M. de Lebzeltern,² whom he hates. I fancy that little creature Strangford is carrying on as many petty intrigues as possible ; that was a nice present from England. . . .

¹ Ambassador to the Sublime Porte.

² Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg.

London, March 10, 1826.

My life has been pretty restless for the last year. It has been filled with every kind of public and private happening. As a finishing touch, my husband has gone ; and though nothing is simpler, apparently, than the reason for his going, I cannot help thinking there is more in it than meets the eye. These are the Emperor's words as transcribed by Count Nesselrode : "The Emperor invites the Count de Lieven to come to see the Grand Duke Nicolas, as soon as he feels able to absent himself from his post." The invitation was preceded by a great many remarks very flattering to my husband. It took a month to reach him ; at the time the Emperor issued this invitation, they did not know in St. Petersburg that the Duke of Wellington was being despatched. There was no choice. It was a good opportunity, and there was nothing to do here. The summons is gracious ; and, naturally, he feels the importance of getting to know his new master in every aspect, both public and private. Therefore, he left on the spot. We debated whether I should go with him or no. Every argument pointed to my staying ; and here I am.

Now, I do not believe that one sends for a person from so far off, merely to look at him. Besides, a few days before he was proclaimed Emperor, he had planned this and had informed me. Why has he sent for him ? I know nothing. He likes my husband and respects him ; and he likes and respects scarcely anybody else in the world. Does he want to keep him ? For what post I have no idea. My husband will resist all proposals. He has not a spark of ambition in his make-up. He wishes to be of service ; but he is accustomed to being of service in his own way ; and that is possible only in his present post. On the other hand, the Emperor knows that it would be very difficult to replace

him here. "*Voilà du blanc et du coquelicot*," as Pertet¹ says in one of his farces. I am waiting with a good deal of impatience, since it is in my nature to be impatient, but without anxiety ; for, in any case, he will do nothing foolish, and his journey can have none but favourable results. His first letters will show me where we are. He is determined to come back, unless he is prevented by main force. Personally, I should be very sorry if anything interfered with his career, as I could no longer accustom myself to any other.

March 20.

My answer to your question, if I had any presentiment or any suspicion of what has happened in Russia, is short and simple—No ; and I should not have believed you, if you had told me. You see that I am truthful to the point of rudeness. Do you want to know why I should have refused to believe it ? Because I did not think the Russians had the courage for a plot of that kind. So much for my compatriots : I am in a polite mood today. After that, to say that I am shocked and indignant is wholly inadequate to my feelings. Above all, I feel ashamed at so much absurdity and ignorance, so much folly and barbarism. So that is how civilisation is progressing. It distresses me that the trial should drag on. That is not like the Emperor. There must be strong reasons ; for he is firm and decided, and he is not influenced by pity when justice is what is needed. But you may well ask where all this will end in Russia. You cannot cut off four thousand heads ; and if I am to believe rumour more than that are implicated. Does one ever forget having spent six months in a fortress or having gone in fear of one's life ? It is dangerous to leave an enemy alive—but how is he to be killed ? What a task for the Emperor ! I repeat to myself that he is the only man capable of getting through it. I hope I am right.

¹ Famous French comic actor.

The King of England has been very ill. The public, of all classes and all opinions, have been greatly alarmed ; they are afraid of his successor. He is pig-headed and narrow-minded. The King is uneasy at the absence of the Duke of Wellington. I think they will fetch him back sooner, as a result of the King's illness. It has been commonly reported that Canning was trying to take advantage of the Duke's trip to get rid of him, and at the same time to eliminate all troublesome members of the Cabinet, even Lord Liverpool ; to make himself Prime Minister ; and to take Lords Grey, Lansdowne and Holland as colleagues. I won't go so far as to say that is not his wish and, possibly, his plan ; but it would be too difficult to carry out yet. Moreover, I do not see what more he wants. He is master ; perhaps more so with his present colleagues than he would be with others. Power is what counts ; the title means nothing. The Opposition share his views and his interests. He has no rivals ; and those he turned out might become rivals. So I think that, in spite of rumours, everything will remain as it is, and that in any case Mr. Canning will go on ruling England as long as he pleases.

He has become much more friendly with me since my husband left. He never pays calls ; but he has come to see me several times ; and the day before yesterday I had a private talk with him lasting over two hours. I suspect that he was making a kind of reconnaissance. He wanted to test my judgement and the capacity of my poor mind. He talked about everything, including you. There is no change in that respect ; you do not love one another. If he hoped to find something out by the interview, I, for my part, made excellent use of my time, and had a good look at him. He is quite as clever as they say. I fancy he is a man whom one might catch, but could never hold.

The 26th.

The King of England has been very ill ; but bleeding does him no good ; it merely gives him an excuse for staying in bed a little longer, which he likes better than anything. During three days he was in danger, his mistress tried to desert him. It is pure Maintenon. The Duke of York persuaded her to stay.

Your Esterhazy comes to see me every day now. These fits don't last. I am equally indifferent to his presence and his absence ; for, with him, the one proves no more than the other. Somebody persuaded him, the other day, that the Duke of York was annoyed with him ; he believes anything of this kind, for he is a born coward and very suspicious. The day before yesterday, the Duke was announced when your Ambassador was alone with me. He jumped out of his chair and begged me, with an air of terror, to hide him in my bedroom, the door of which was open. "Not at all, *mon Prince*," I replied, "you will go out as you came in" ; and the dreaded encounter took place. As luck would have it, the Duke of York is afflicted with asthma and always remains speechless for a few minutes after he has climbed a staircase. Now, as it is customary to take one's leave when Royalty enters, the result was that the Duke did not say a word to him, for the simple reason that he had not yet recovered his breath. I can't tell you how the scene amused me—the Duke's little short bows, Esterhazy's bent back and squinting eyes—it was as good as a play.

The 28th.

Mr. Canning came to see me again yesterday ; this time we had an hour's *tête-à-tête*, because I was so ill that I could not stand any more. His visits excite curiosity in diplomatic circles, and especially the curiosity of insignificant people, who

see mysteries in everything. Insignificant people can be recognised by their passion for conjecture. Meanwhile, we are getting to know one another. The first quarter of an hour is rather difficult ; Mr. Canning speaks halting French ; afterwards, it goes swimmingly ; for his way of expressing himself is highly individual. The word is always suited to the idea, no matter how unusual it is ; and it is all so much to the point, so clear-cut, that it is a pleasure to listen to. You ought to hear him on Lord Strangford. I fancy he means to destroy him, as he destroyed Sir C. Stuart. But he bides his time ; for he likes taking good aim. What I find surprising in Mr. Canning is to see so much perseverance allied to so much vivacity ; it is rarely encountered. He strikes quickly and firmly ; but his moves are always calculated. He has an odd habit, perhaps only when he is with me—when I am speaking he shuts his eyes as if he were asleep. I used to make you yawn ; I make him fall asleep. I am lucky with Ministers.

April 16.

Mr. Canning asked me to dinner yesterday at his house, among all his intimate friends, as if I were one of them. He made some remark which pointed to this. I laughed and said : "Wait and see." He is all attentions and confidences. I fancy that yesterday he wanted to show me off. His guests stared. I am expecting some better position than that of teacher of languages ; I will let you know. I will give you a little example of the man's pride. He had confided to me a few weeks ago that the Duke of Devonshire would be appointed as English representative at the coronation of the Czar ; but, at the same time, he begged me not to mention it. Yesterday, he explained why he had insisted on secrecy. The affair was then only being discussed ; it was like this.

He had commissioned Lord Granville to propose it to the Duke of Devonshire, who was in Paris, and to let him know if he would like to undertake the mission, in which case he would offer it him officially. The Duke, who is leader of the Whigs and who did not feel that he ought to accept anything from a Tory Minister, replied that he would take the post with pleasure if the offer came from the King. (He has always been on very intimate terms with him.) Thereupon, Mr. Canning addressed a despatch to Lord Granville saying it was very extraordinary that the Duke of Devonshire should be unaware that the King had no wishes but those of his Minister ; that he begged him to understand that it was he, Mr. Canning, who was inviting him to go as English representative to the coronation at Moscow ; and that only on receipt of his reply would he submit the plan to the King, who was merely the passive instrument of his Ministers' resolutions. That was bad enough ; here is the real impertinence—the despatch was sent for the approval of the King, who wrote in the margin : “Certainly,” and then sent to the Duke of Devonshire with the words : “Either the Duke accepts from Mr. Canning or not at all”—and the Duke of Devonshire accepted. It would be impossible to emphasise one's power more obviously.

London, April 26, 1826.

Mr. Canning must be annoyed that his child is dead ; but he has the consolation of being able to recall the nursemaid. The defeat of the Duke of Wellington helps to alleviate his ill-temper, and gives him a touch of malice which one might almost take for satisfaction. He has another satisfaction—that of thinking that you have no right to utter a word of complaint, because at bottom the idea is yours. You are being left the honour of settling two questions—the Turkish and

the Greek ; but the first is being treated quite differently from the way you intended. So you will get the credit, but not the advantage. That is how Mr. Canning looks at it ; and it cheers him up. His Sunday visits—for he never fails to give me a two hours' *tête-à-tête* on that day—are quite an occasion for me. In the middle of a serious discussion, a comic idea crosses his mind, and he bursts out laughing. I do not think he cherishes hatred ; for he has a strong sense of his own superiority. This conviction has taken root in him, and gives him a confidence which allows his wit full play. But how quickly it moves ; how it gallops ! I think I told you that what strikes me as rare in him is an immense vivacity, keeping step with the most dogged persistence that I know. I fancy this is an uncommon combination.

I am ill, my chest, my legs, everything is in a state of revolt. I am yellow, and I don't like the colour except for hangings. Anywhere else, I abominate it.

Strange ideas come into my head. A certain political combination, the one which officially should vex me most, might bring you here. Well, is that so silly ? Imagine my embarrassment, having to rejoice and mourn, both at the same time ! I should like, for the sake of curiosity, to be in that position. I think I should like it for another reason too.

May 14.

Odd things have been happening here since my last letter. The Government thought they were going to be thrown out in a body. You will have read of their difficulties. Now Mr. Canning is trying to get rid of his Ultra colleagues and join forces with Lord Lansdowne. I owe this discovery to chance ; but it has been confirmed by what Canning has subsequently told me. A fortnight ago, he suddenly left London, saying that he was going to spend a night at Bath.

That seemed suspicious ; however, as it was impossible to find any reason for his trip, one ended by supposing that he wished merely to refresh himself by a visit to the country. This, however, was what actually happened. He left his carriage and his servants at Marlborough, and went on foot across the fields to a little inn, where he had arranged to meet Lord Lansdowne, who had taken the same precautions in coming. They were closeted together for five hours.

The other day, Mr. Canning and I were talking about public affairs and parties. He said : "Sooner or later, we must join with Lord Lansdowne. He is a moderate man. Lord Grey is the difficulty ; with him, it will never be possible to come to an agreement." His plan is to overthrow Lord Liverpool (he has a grateful heart) and give Lansdowne the place of Prime Minister. They are trying to persuade Liverpool that he is very ill ; and I think they are right. All this may happen any day. The change may occur during the Parliamentary recess. The King is certainly in Canning's hands and very cold towards the Duke of Wellington. He tries to hide both these facts from us ; but you can be sure that it is so. Recently, I had a three hours' *tête-à-tête* with him. He had been using all sorts of little intrigues to force me to visit him in the morning. Finally, seeing that had no effect, he sent word quite openly by the Duke of Wellington that he had something to say to me and that he begged me to call. It was a Royal command, and I went. He began by talking about the affairs of Europe, then proceeded to the relations of his Ministers amongst themselves, and to those of the Opposition with Mr. Canning ; that went on for a good time ; and then he came to his own affairs ; and here is the strange confession he made to me. His mistress bores him ; she is a fool (he might have found that out sooner). He has been in love with me for thirteen years. He has never dared to tell me ; he hoped I should find it out for myself. Today,

an inner voice told him that I alone could guide him. Our minds are alike ; our views agree ; my tastes will be his : "In a word, Heaven made us for one another." I was a little embarrassed by this long declaration, accompanied, as it was, by would-be amorous glances. But when he spoke of Heaven, I took the only course and said that I, too, had always felt that we were close to one another, that our ideas were so much the same that I felt he must be at least my cousin. "Well, yes, that's true, that's true ; but you are satisfied too exclusively with the spiritual side ; I can't be content with that—I am really and truly in love with you, very much in love."—"That, Sir, does not seem to me to be written in Heaven ; so I will leave you to think it over. You might regret having destroyed an old friendship ; and you know that, as a friend, I love you dearly." I rose ; he opened his bedroom door and asked me to look at the portrait facing his bed. It was a sketch of me, done by Lawrence. He told me that he had just bought it, and that he would never part with it. I stopped at the door, curtsied to the King and went out. What do you think of this strange scene ? I intend to avoid a quarrel with my new cousin. It will be the easier because he is lying : he is not in love with me at all.

Richmond, May 16.

I have been interrupted the last two days by inquisitive people coming to see what I was doing at Richmond. Such a waste of trouble ! I am alone with my children, and I go out with them. At daybreak, we are already striding across the fields. Later, I come home and work. After dinner, I return with them to the banks of the Thames. Sometimes, we take a boat and are rowed, very gently. I give not a thought either to politics or to my Canning. My mind is occupied with peaceful thoughts. My little George occa-

sionally interrupts them to ask me if the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is wider than the Thames at Richmond, or some other geographical question of that kind. We get back late, and I go to bed early. It was well worth the trouble of coming down from London to solve this enigma.

Lady Georgina Wellesley has given me your letter ; she never stops talking about you. She tells me everything I want to hear and some things I don't—among the latter, your daily visits to Mademoiselle Leykam,¹ who some say is your future wife, others your present mistress. Certainly, there must be some such explanation of your assiduity ; for I hear that neither the father nor the mother deserve the honour of these visits, but that the daughter is very pretty. So much for the constancy of men. Don't you think my reproaches are rather lukewarm ? If I were to take revenge—Heavens, no, I shan't take revenge. So much for the folly of women.

I am closing this letter, so that I can send it by Schönburg. We write one another strange epistles, it seems to me. Present-day politics rather spoil our relations. Perhaps they will straighten themselves out naturally. It would not be the first time that a very complicated question had solved itself in quite a simple fashion. If it depended only on good wishes, I have enough and to spare.

I beg you to love me as you always have done. I fancy I asked the same thing in my last letter, in spite of the Hump.² Today, I beg you to do so in spite of young ladies. What a strange man you are ! Taking notice of a little girl ! I should look funny, if I were to bother myself with a little boy ! This is not a threat ; I would rather kill myself. Good-bye.

¹ Antonie von Leykam, afterwards Metternich's second wife. She died in 1829.

² The Turkish question, on which Austria and Russia were parting company.

London, June 4.

My husband writes me the most innocent letters in the world. He tells me nothing about affairs and nothing about himself. It is very ungrateful of him ; for my letters are not nearly so uninformative. But the difference between us is that he is naturally very cautious, and that I do not feel the least obligation. I detest cautious people ; all the same, this does not mean that I am not devoted to my husband, and particularly look forward to his return.

Society goes on as usual ; but many slight changes are creeping in, imperceptible if you look at them every day, but clear enough if you contemplate them only once a week. My habits with Mr. Canning place me in this position. He comes to talk to me regularly every Sunday. We never see each other apart from this *tête-à-tête* ; and it provides a little summary of the week's politics. The Court, domestic politics—we touch on everything. That man is an extraordinary character. One might suppose, from the vivacity of his impressions and the rapidity of his mind, that he would take things up and then drop them, that his opinions would be changeable ; but this is not so. He proceeds by leaps and bounds, but always along the same road. He will do foolish things, but they will never make him turn aside from the path he has marked out for himself. In everything, he will always get what he wants. I fancy that even opposition pleases him ; it strengthens him in his purpose.

June 14.

I do not know how it has come about, that I found no time to return to this letter until today. I spent a week at Windsor, at the Cottage. I enjoyed myself very much. We had Mr. Canning there as an intimate for the first time. The Duke of Wellington was there too. They look friendly ;

but, in fact, they are on bad terms. The King, for his part, wanted to show his esteem for Canning ; but the audience embarrassed him. Esterhazy was more than embarrassed, because Canning, Dietrichstein and I were observing his exhibition of servility towards the King. Really, he behaves like his footman. I, too, found myself placed in a new light, as a result of the little intimacy which has grown up between Mr. Canning and myself. The King is pleased ; the others rather surprised. I give the King thousands of opportunities for showing his Minister a politeness which is not due to his rank in society. Wellington looks on ; Esterhazy squints. The King and I amuse ourselves ; and he tries to play little tricks on me. He persists in his advances and, the other day, made a scene that was sufficiently ridiculous at his age. After lunch, we had all gone to get ready to go out. My suite looks, at one side, on to a very dark tree-shaded walk leading to the chapel. All the windows reach to the ground and open on a level with the garden. While I was in front of the mirror, the King slipped quietly behind the hornbeam at the end of the walk. I opened the window, and asked him if they were waiting for me. He put his finger to his lips and, with gestures and passionate looks, begged to be allowed to come into my room. It is so rude to laugh that I restrained myself ; but I turned away, called my maid aloud, and asked her for my hat. When the King saw her coming, he took fright, gave up his plan and fled so hurriedly that he nearly fell ; with the result that I had time to go back quickly to the drawing-room before he got there himself. When he saw me, he made me a deep bow in the style of Louis XIV. All day he feigned exaggerated respect ; but, in the end, we parted good friends. I fancy that he hopes for the trifling emotions of an affair, and that he hardly cared whether he entered my room or not. In the King's composition are general disgust, boredom, and superlative

vanity. His portrait would be the strangest in the world. If I can produce a really good likeness, I will send it you.

Meanwhile, the spectacle before my eyes amuses me greatly. I feel as if people were acting a play for my special entertainment—and yet sometimes I think that it is I who give it. Such intrigues, such anxiety, such spying ! They still cannot make out what my friendship with Canning can mean. They find every reason except the right one. We get on very well together, because our minds are well assorted. In the midst of company, his eyes meet mine. I know that look well. It means : “Did you see the joke ?” For he notices everything, small things as well as great. He seizes on what is ridiculous so promptly and so amusingly that everyone is afraid of him. He is biting and sarcastic. He keeps one on tenterhooks. As he does not attack me, I enjoy the fun. How you would have laughed at Windsor ! I have not been so much amused for a long time.

Richmond, June 30.

I went to see the Duke of York the other day. He looks a dying man ; I cannot believe that he will last through the summer. The King is deeply distressed. The Duke of Clarence will be a fine King ! The King said to me at table the other day : “Look at that idiot ! They will remember me, if ever he is in my place.”

The 14th.

Mr. Canning came to see me on my hill-top, the other day, on his way back from the seaside. He spoke at great length on the question of Portugal, expressing views with which I was already familiar, but with interesting developments. He said, too, that, while you maintain that a nation owes obedience to the will of its sovereign, you now affirm

that the sovereign has no right to introduce innovations ; which, if Mr. Canning has made no mistake, would imply a power superior to the monarch and capable of judging him. That certainly seems rather contradictory. I wish you would enlighten me on the point ; for I do not understand it in the least. Talking of you, he said : “I don’t know why M. de Metternich imagines that I like constitutional governments. Unquestionably, as an English Minister, it is not my place to oppose them ; but, as a matter of taste, I should much prefer to do without them. It would be much easier for me to influence or to rule a monarchical Cabinet, or a despotic one, or anything else you like. The proof is that new America gives me a hundred times more trouble than old Europe.”

London, August 8.

We have long had the habit of trusting one another. It seems so natural to me to let my thoughts run on when I am writing to you, that I feel quite lost when I cannot tell you everything. Times have changed ; let us not change. Affection should not be inconstant like circumstances.

My husband has returned, a little thinner for having exercised the triple profession of courtier, politician and sergent-major. Nor have his headlong zigzagging travels helped to rest him ; and, from the moment he arrived, his brain has not been quiet for an instant. I was delighted to see him again and made him talk a great deal. Everything he tells me is satisfactory. My Emperor is doing well and will continue to do better, as long as the flattery by which he is surrounded does not go to his head. One knows where one is with him. Everything is simple and easy. He will do much for Russia ; he is more of a Russian than his brother, and he should inspire Europe with respect and confidence. It is a pleasure to serve such a sovereign. He will keep people

up to the mark ; but with him it will always be plain sailing. It seems to me that you do him justice in spite of . . . But let us not talk about that.

We spent nearly the whole of last week at Windsor. It was a family reunion, the first to my knowledge. The little future Queen was there. In spite of the caresses the King lavished on her, I could see that he did not like dandling on his sixty-four-year-old knee this little bit of the future, aged 7. Everything went off quite well. We spent nine hours on the water, sitting on the grass, or out driving in phaetons. His Majesty got drunk one day, in a way people don't get drunk any longer ; he was full of attentions towards me, and full of gaiety ; and, as a result, our good Duke was in such ecstasies of hilarity that he laughed in his face. It was really the mad-house that he calls it. Esterhazy was not included in the party, much to everyone's astonishment and much to his distress.

Brighton, November 9.

I am at a loss, and I feel gloomy. I have no more news from you ; and you have deprived me of the means of writing to you. I hear that Neumann is arriving very soon. I take courage again. Let us see what he will bring me. In any case, I am getting this ready for his noble hands.

We have been here all the time Mr. Canning was in France. His return has obliged my husband to go to London and to stay there. I myself am taking another eight days' holiday, so that I may continue to get fatter. I have been very ill with bile and vapours. I made my will ; but I am not going to die yet. Talking of wills, I implore you not to forget to bequeath my letters to me in yours. Your letters will certainly be returned to you after my death. It seems to me that our correspondence ought to be of the greatest

value to an historian of our times. My letters have been a most faithful record of everything that came to my knowledge ; and many important facts are explained in those you have written to me. In short, it strikes me that the truth will emerge more clearly from this exchange of letters than from any memoirs that may be published.

The 12th.

Esterhazy will probably have told you that my husband has been on cool terms with him since his return from Russia ; for he complained about it here loudly enough. The fact is that your man began the quarrel and that my husband, who has not become any more amenable since his visit to the Emperor, but rather the reverse, was only too ready to keep it up. I don't like quarrels, and I should have liked nothing better than to point out to my husband that he was wrong and that he ought to make the first advance to Esterhazy, if I had not seen the latter purposely turn his back on him. My husband responded, rather as you did with the Duke of Wellington at Verona, when he put on his hat in front of a certain mantelpiece. So those were the terms they were on when, one day, we arrived at Windsor, invited, all of us, by the King. While I was dressing, my husband went to get warm in the garden. There was only one path on that side, and my window overlooked it. I saw Esterhazy doing the same as my husband, but in the opposite direction. Suddenly, he stopped, fifty yards from my husband, like a man struck by a thunderbolt. After a few seconds, I saw him making himself smaller, and still smaller, and finally doubling up completely, crawling under the brambles and hiding behind them. My husband, advancing with his even pace, passed by the spot where the other was in ambush ; and, at that moment, Esterhazy burst out like a lion from beneath the

brambles and rushed up to my husband with open arms. He asked him affectionately for an explanation and gave one himself. "But, really, you are still my friend? You can't imagine how upset I was by your coldness; but now I am happy again"—and so on, with all the platitudes, all the nonsense talked by a couple of lovers making up a quarrel. Though not conventional, it was very nice of him, if very childish. My husband told me all about it while I was dressing. Had I not seen it, I should not have credited his description of the comedy. I amused the King by telling him afterwards.

The 22nd.

Neumann gave me your No. 174 yesterday. You have done so little to spoil me for some time that that letter seemed quite an occasion. I hasten to thank you. Do unassuming manners make you more generous? They do me. If you are like me, you ought to write to me often. Let us start again from the beginning. We should be hard put to it, you and I, to find in the whole world people of our own calibre. Our hearts are well matched, our minds too; and our letters are very pleasant. . . . I repeat: you will find no-one better than me. If you meet your like, show him to me. Good-bye.

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